The Batchellors Banquet

OR,

A Banquet for Batchellors,

Wherein is prepared fundry dainty diſhes to furniſh their tables, curiouſly dreſt, and ſeriouſly ſerved in.

Pleaſantly diſcourſing the variable humours of Women, their quickneſs of wits, and unſearchable deceits.

View them well, but taſte not,
Regard them well, but waſte not.

LONDON,
Printed for *Edward Thomas* at the *Adam* and *Eve* in *Little-Brittain*, 1677.

You Batchellors that with us mean to feaſt,
Come all and welcome to our homely fare;
If at our Banquet you will be a Gueſt,
Here at our furniſht Table take a ſhare:
Our Ordinary is but ſix pence price.
Variety of diſhes, be not nice.

We muſt confeſs our board it is not ſpread
As is the married mans, with Carp and Lout;
We do not uſe to feed upon Cods-head,
Crabs, Ill-pies, Gudgeon, nor the dogged Pout:
For fleſh, we taſte no Souſe, no Lomb, no Quail,
No Woodcock, Wigeon, Bittern, Gooſe nor Rail.

For our laſt ſervice, we feed not on Chuſe;
Small-reaſons, Bitter-almonds, nor choak-pears;
We eat the beſt, and do the worſt refuſe,
Have good content, and ſing away ſad cares:
Good diet, Engliſh beer, and Spaniſh ſherry,
Come Batchellors then let us all be merry.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The Batchellors Banquet:

Or a Banquet for Batchellors: wherin is prepared ſundry diſhes to furniſh their Table: Curiouſly dreſt, and ſeriouſly ſerved in.

CHAP. I.

The humour of a young wife new married.

IT is the natural inclination of a young Gallant in the pleaſant prime, and flower of his flouriſhing youth being freſh luſty and jocond, to take no other care but to imploy his money to buy gay preſents for pretty laſſes, to frame his green wits in penning love Ditties, his voice to ſing them ſweetly, his wandring eyes to gaze on the faireſt dames and his wanton thoughts to plot means for the ſpeedy accompliſhment of his wiſhed deſires, according to the compaſs of his eſtate. And albeit his parents or ſome other of his kinred, do perhaps furniſh him with neceſſary maintenance, ſo that he wants nothing, but lives in all eaſe & delight; yet cannot this content him, or ſatisfie his unexperienced mind: for although he daily ſee many married men firſt lapt in lobs pound, wanting former liberty, and compaſſed round in a a cage of many cares, yet notwithſtanding over-ruled by ſelf-will, and blind by folly he ſuppoſes them therein to have the fulneſſe of their delight, becauſe they have ſo near them the Image of content Venus ſtar gloriouſly blazing upon them, I mean a dainty fair wife bravely attired, whoſe apparel perhaps is not yet paid for, howſoever (to draw their husband into a fools paradiſe) they make them believe that their father or mother have of their coſt, & bounty afforded it. This luſty youth (as I earſt ſaid) ſeeing them already in this maze of bitter ſweetneſs, he goes round about, turmoyling himſelf in ſeeking an entrance, and taking ſuch pains to find his own pain, & in the end, in he gets, when for the haſt he makes to have a taſte of theſe ſuppoſed delicates he hath no leiſure to think, or no care to provide thoſe things that are hereunto requiſite. The jolly Yonker being thus gotten in, doth for a time ſwim in delight, and hath no de-

fire at all to winde himself out again, till time and use which makes all things more familiar and less pleasing, do qualifie this humour: then glutted with satiety, or pinched with penury, he may perhaps begin to see his folly, & repent as well his fondness, as his too much forwardnesse, but all too late, he must have patience perforce: his wife must be maintained according to her degree, and withall (commonly it haps she carries the right stomach of a Woman) slender maintenence will not serve, for as their minds mount above their estates, so commonly they will have their abiliments. And if at a feast or some other gossips meeting whereunto she is invited, she see any of the company gaily attired for cost or fashion, or both, or chiefly the latter, for generally women do affect novelties, she forthwith moves a question in her self, why she also should not be in the like sort attired, to have her garments cut after the new fashion as well as the rest, and answers it with resolution, that she will and must have the like: Waiting onely fit time and place for the moving and winning of her husband thereunto, of both which she will make such choice, that when she speaks she will be sure to speed; observing her opportunity when she might take her husband at the most advantage, which is commonly the garden of love, the state of marriage delights, and the life wherein the weaker sex hath ever the better: when therefore this lusty Gallant would fulfill his desire, for which cause he chiefly ran wilfully into the peril of lobs pound, then squeamishly she begins thus, saying, I pray you husband let me alone, trouble me not, for I am not well at ease: which he hearing, presently makes this reply.

Why my sweet heart what ailes you, are you not well: I pray thee wife tell me, where lies thy grief? or what is the cause of your discontent? whereupon the vile woman fetching a deep sigh makes this answer? O Husband, God help me, I have cause enough to grieve, and if you knew all you would say so: but alas it is in vain to tell you any thing, seeing that whatsoever I say, you make but little reckoning of it: and therefore it is best for me to bury my sorrows in silence, being out of hope to have any help at your hands. Jesus, wife (saith he) why use you these words? is my unkindness such, that I may not know your grief: tell me I say, what is the matter? In truth husband it were to no purpose, for I know your custome well enough; as for my words they are but waste winde in your ears, for how great soever my grief is, I am

assured

assured you will but make light of it, and think that I speak it for some other purpose.

Go to Wife, saith her husband, tell it me, for I will know it. Well husband, if you will needs, you shall. You know on Thursday last, I was sent for, and you willed me to go to Mistress M. Churching, and when I came thither, I found great cheer, and no small company of wives, but the meanest of them all was not so ill attired as I; and surely I was never so ashamed of my self in my life: Yet I speak it not to praise my self, but it is well known, and I dare boldly say, that the best women there, came of no better stock than I. But alas, I speak not this for my self, for God wot I pass not how meanly I am apparelled, but I speak it for your credit, and my friends. Why Wife, saith he, of what calling and degree were those you speak of? Truely good Husband (saith she) the meanest that was there, being but of my degree, was in her loose Gown, with hanging sleeves, her French Roses, her Silk Grograine Kirtle, her Bever Hat, with a Gold Band, and these with the rest of her attire, made of the newest fashion which is known the best: Whereas I poor wretch had on my thredbare Gown, which was made me so long agoe, against I was married, besides that it was now too short for me, for it is I remember, since it was made about three years agoe, since which time I am grown very much, and so changed with cares and griefs, that I look far older then I am: Trust me, I was so ashamed, being amongst my neighbours, that I had not the heart to look up, but that which grieved me most was when Mistress Luce B. and Mistress T. said openly that it was a shame both for you and me, that I had no better Apparel. Tush Wife (quoth the good man) let them say what they list, we are never a whit the worse for their words, we have enough to doe with our money, though we spend it not in Apparell: You know Wife, when we met together, we had no great store of Houshold-stuff, but were fain to buy it afterward by some and some, as God sent money, and yet you see we want many things that are necessary to be had: Besides the Quarter Day is neer, and my Landlord you know will not forbear his Rent: Moreover, you see how much it costs me in Law about the recovering of the tenement which I should have by you: God send me to get it quickly,

or

or else I shall have but a bad bargain of it, for it hath already almost cost me as much as it is worth. At these words his Wives choler begins to rise, whereupon she makes him this answer. Goodly, goodly, (saith she) when you have nothing else to hit me in the teeth withall, yet twit me with the tenement; but it is my fortune. Why how now Wife saith her Husband, are you now angry for nothing? Nay, I am not angry, I must be content with that which God hath ordained for me: But I wis the time was, when I might have been better advised, there are some yet living that would have been glad to have me in my smock, whom you know well enough to be proper young men and therewithall wise and wealthy: but I verily suppose I was bewicht to match with a man that loves me not: though I purchased the ill will of all my friends for his sake, this is all the good that I have gotten thereby: I may truly say I am the most unhappy Woman in the world: Doe you think that Law. Tom. and N. M. (who were both suters to me) do keep their Wives so? no by lady, for I know the worst cloths that they cast off, are better than my very best which I wear on the chiefest dayes in the year: I know not what the cause is that so many good women dye, but I would to God that I were dead too, that I might trouble you no more, seeing I am such an eye sore unto you. Now by my faith wife, saith he, you say not well, there is nothing that I think too good for you, if my ability can compass it. But you know our estate, we must do as we may, and not as we would, yet be of good cheer, and I will strain my self to please you, in this or any other thing.

Nay, I have no mind on such matters, and if you had no more desire thereto than I, I promise you, you would never touch me. So Wife (saith he) hoping so with a jest to make her merry, by my honesty I swear, I verily think that if I were dead, you would not be long without another husband. So marvel sure saith she, I lead such a good life with you now, By my Christian soul I swear, there should never a man kiss my lips again. And if I thought I should live long with you, I would use means to make my self away: Herewithall she puts finger in the eye, making shew as though she wept: Thus playes she with the silly sot her husband (meaning nothing lesse than to do as she sayes) while he poor fool is in mind both well and ill apaid: he thinks himself well, because he imagines her of a cold constitution, and therefore exceeding chast: he thinks him-

himself ill, to see her fained tears, for that he verily supposes she loves him, which doth not a little grieve him, being so kind and tender hearted. Therefore he useth all means possible to make her quiet, never will he give her over, while he hath effected it. But she prosecuting her former purpose which she hath already set in so fair a forwardnesse, makes as though she were nothing moved with his gentle perswasions: Therefore to crosse him, she gets her up betimes in the morning, sooner a great deal than she was wont, powting and lowring, all the day, and not giving him one good word. But when night comes, and they again both in bed, laying her self sullenly down, and continuing still silent, the good man hearkens whether she sleep or no, feels if she be well covered or not, he softly pluckes up the clothes upon her, lapping her warm, being double diligent to please her. She lying all this while winking, noting his kindnesse and carefulnesse towards her, seems on a sudden to awake from a sound sleep, gruntling and nusling under the sheets giving him occasion thereby thus to begin: How now sweet heart, what are you asleep? Asleep (saith she) faith Sir no: a troubled mind can never take good rest. Why woman are you not quiet yet? No doubt (saith she) you care much whether I be or no. By lady wife and so I do: and since yesternight, I have bethought me (having well considered your words) that it is very meet and requisite, that you should be better furnished with apparell than heretofore you have been, for indeed I must confesse thy clothes are too simple; and therefore I mean against my cousin M. wedding (which you know will be shortly) that you shall have a new gown made on the best fashion, with all things suitable thereunto, in such sort that the best woman in the parish shall not passe you. Nay (quoth she) God willing I mean to go to no weddings this twelve moneth, for the goodly credit I got by the last By my faith (saith he) but you shall, what? you must not be so headstrong and self-willed. I tell you if I say the word you shall go, and you shall want nothing that you ask or require. That I ask? alas husband (quoth she) I ask nothing, neither did I speak this for any desire that I have to go brave, trust me, for my own part I care not if I never stir abroad save onely to Church: but what I said was upon the speeches which were there used, and such other like words, which my Gossip N. told me that she had also heard in company where she was. With these words the good kind fool her husband

band is netled, for on the one side he considers his sundry other occasions to use money, his small store thereof, which is perhaps so slender, that his single purse cannot extempore change a double pistolet. And so ill bested of houshold stuff, that perhaps the third part is not a sufficient pawn for so much money as this new sute of his Wives will stand him in. But on the other side he weighs her discontent, the report of neighbours speeches, and lastly how good a Wife he hath of her, how chast, how loving, how religious, whereof the kind Asse hath such an opinion, that he thanks God with all his heart, for blessing him with such a Jewel: In this thought he resolves that all other things set aside, he must and will content her. And herewithall he sets his brains afresh on work, to consider how best he may compass it: And in this humour he spends the whole night without sleep, in continual thought. And it comes to pass that the Wife perceiving to what a point she hath brought her purpose, doth not a little rejoyce and smile in her sleeve to see it. The next morning by the break of day the poor man gets up who for care and thought could take no rest all night, and goes presently to the Drapers, of whom he takes up cloath for three moneths time, paying for it after an excessive rate, by reason of their forbearance, and in like sort makes provision for the rest; for perhaps because he would buy it at a better rate, he pawns for ready money the Lease of his house, or some fair piece of plate, which his grandfather bought, and his father charily keeping, left for him which now he is enforced to part with, to furnish thereby his wives pride; and having thus dispatched his business he returns home with a merry heart, and shews his Wife what he hath done: who being now sure of all, begins to curse the first inventers of pride, and excess in apparel: saying, Fie upon it, what pride is this? but I pray you husband, do not say hereafter that I made you lay out your money in this needless sort, for I protest that I have no delight or desire to go thus garishly: If I have to cover my body and keep me warm, it contents me. The good man hearing his Wife say so, doth even leap for joy, thinking all her words Gospel, and therefore presently he sets the taylor awork, willing him to dispatch out of hand, that his wife may be brave so soon as may be. She having thus obtained her purpose, doth inwardly triumph for very joy, howsoever outwardly she doth dissemble, And whereas before she vaunted, that she could find in her heart to

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keep always within doors, she will be sure now every good day to go abroad, and at each feast and Gossips meeting to be a continual guest, that all may see her bravery, and how well she doth become it; for which cause she also comes every Sunday daily to the Church, that there she may see and be seen, which her Husband thinks she doth of meer devotion. But in the mean while the time runs on, and the day comes wherein the poor man must pay his Creditors, which being unable to do, he is at length arrested, and after due proceeding in Law, he hath an Execution served upon him, or his pawn is forfeited, and by either of both he is almost utterly undone. Then must his fine wife of force veil her peacocks plumes, and fall again to her old byas, keeping her house against her will, because she could not be furnisht with gay attire according to her mind. But God knoweth in what misery the silly man doth live, being daily vexed with her brawling and scolding, exclaiming against him, that all the house doth ring thereof, and in this sort she begins her bagaries: Now cursed be the day that ever I saw thy face, and a shame take them that brought me first acquainted with thee: I would to God I had either died in my cradle. or gone to my grave when I went to be married with thee. Was ever woman of my degree and birth brought to this beggery? or any of my bringing up kept thus basely and brought to this shame? I which little knew what labour meant, must now toyl and tend the house as a drudge having never a coat to my back, or scant handsome hose to my legs, and yet all little enough, whereas, I wis, I might have had twenty good marriages, in the meanest of which I should have lived at ease and pleasure, without being put to any pain, or suffering any penury. Wretch that I am, why do I live? Now would to God I were in my grave already, for I am weary of the World, weary of my life, and weary of all. Thus doth she daily complain, and lay all the fault of her fall on him which least deserved it, nothing remembring her own pride, in coveting things above their estate or ability, her misgovernment, and daily gadding with her Gossips to Banquets and Bridals, when she should have lookt to her house and followed her own business at home. And his folly is also such, that being blinded with dotage, (through too much loving her,) cannot perceive that she is the cause of all this evil, of all the cares, griefs,

Alas poor fool.

and thoughts, which perplex and torture him, and yet nothing cuts him so much as this, to see her so fumish and unquiet, whom if he can any time somwhat pacifie, then is his heart somewhat at rest. Thus doth the silly wretch toss and turmoyle himself in Lobs pound, wrapt in a kind of pleasing woe, out of the which he hath neither power nor will to winde himself: but therein doth consume the remnant of his languishing life, and miserably end his days.

CHAP. II. The humour of a woman pranked up in brave apparel.

THe nature of a woman inclined to another kind of humour (which is this) when the wife seeing her self bravely apparelled, and that she is therewith fair and comely, (or if she be not) yet thinking her self so (as women are naturally given to sooth themselves) she doth, as I said before, haunt after feasts and solemn meetings, wherewith her husband perhaps is not very well pleased: which she perceiving, the more to blear his eyes, she takes with her some kinswoman, or Gossip, or possibly some lusty Gallant, of whom she claims kinred, though in very deed there be no such matter, but onely a smooth colour to deceive her husband: And perchance to induce him the sooner to believe it, her mother (which is privy to the match) will not stick to say and swear it is so: Yet sometime the husband to prevent his wives gadding, will feign some lett, as want of horses or other like hinderances: then presently the Gossip or Kinswoman (of whom before I spake) will thus solemnly assault him.

Believe me Gossip, I have as little pleasure as who hath least in going abroad, for I wis I had not so much businesse to do this xii moneths as I have at this instant: yet should I not go to this wedding, being so kindly bidden, I know the young Bride would take it in very ill part. Yea and (I may say to you) so would our neighbors, and other our friends which will be there, who would verily imagine, we keep away for some other cause: and were it not for this I protest I would not stir out of doors, neither would my Cousin your wife have any desire to go thither: thus much I can truly witness that I never knew any woman take less delight in such things than your wife; or which being abroad, will make more haste to be at home again.

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The silly man her Husband, being vanquished by these words, and no longer able to deny their request, demands only what other women do appoint to go, and who shall man them? Marry Sir: (saith she) that shall my Cousin H. And besides your wife and I, there goes my Kinswoman T. and her Mother, Mistress H. and her Aunt: my Uncle T. & his Brother, to be met with both their wives, Mistress C. my next neighbour: and to conclude, all the women of account in this street: (I dare boldly say) that honester Company there cannot be, though it were to convey a Kings Daughter.

Now it oft chanced that this smooth tongued Dratrix who pleads thus queintly with womans art, must have for her pains a Gown cloth, a Jewel, or some other recompence, if she prevail with the good man, and cunningly play her part. Heafter some pause (perhaps) will reply in this sort: Gossip, I confess it is very good company but my wife hath now great business at home, and besides she useth to go very much abroad, yet for this time I am content she shall go. But I pray you Dame (quoth he) be at home betimes. His wife seeing that her gossip had gotten leave makes as if she cares not for going forth, saying: By my faith man I have something else to do, than to go a Bridal at this present: what? we have a great household, and rude servants (God wot) whose idleness is such, that they will not do any thing, if a bodies back be turn'd: for it is an old Proverb: (When the Cat is away the Mouse will play.) And therefore Gossip hold you content, we must not be altogether careless nor set so much by our pleasure to neglect our profit: And therefore hold me excused, for I cannot now be spared nor I will not go, that is flat. Nay good gossip (saith the other) seeing your husband hath given you leave, let us have your company this once, and if it be but for my sake, such a chance as this comes not every day. With that the good man taking the old Gyb aside, whispers her thus in the ear: were it not Gossip for the confidence I repose in you, I protest she should not stir out of doors at this time. Now as I am an honest woman (quoth she) and of my credit Gossip, you shall not need to doubt any thing.

Thus to horse they get, and away they spur with a merry gallop, laughing to themselves, mocking and flouting the silly man for his simplicity: the one saying to the other, that he had a shrewd jea-

lous brain, but it should avail him nothing. Tush (said the young woman) it is an old saying, He had need have a long spoon that will eat with the devil, and she of a good wit that would prevent the fury of a jealous fool: and with this and the like talk, they passe the time till they come to the place appointed, where they meet with lusty Gallants, who (peradventure) had at the former feast made the match and were come thither of purpose to strike up the bargain. But howsoever it is, this lusty Lasse lacks no good chær, nor any kindnes which they can shew her.

Imagine now how forward she will be to shew her best skill in dancing and singing, and how lightly she will afterward estæm her husband being thus courted and commended by a crew of lusty Gallants, who seing her so brauely attired, and graced with so sweet and smooth a tongue, so sharp a wit, so amiable a countenance, will each strive to excæd other, in serving, loving, and pleasing her: for the gallant carriage and wanton demeanour of so beautifull a piece, cannot chuse but incourage a mær coward, and heat (if not inflame) a frozen heart: One assayes her with sugred tearms, and some pleasant discourse, painting forth his affection with Lovers eloquence: Another gives her a priuie token, by straining her soft hand, or treading upon her pretty foot: Another eyes her with a piercing and pitiful look, making his countenance his fancies Herauld: and perhaps the third (which is most likely to spæd) bestowes upon her a gold Ring, a Diamond, a Ruby or some such like costly toy: By all which aforesaid tokens, she may well conceive their meanings, (if she have any conceit at all;) and sometimes it so falls out, that they fall in where they should not: and she stepping somewhat aside, doth so shrewdly strain her honesty, that hardly or never the grief can be cured. But to procæd this over-gorgeous wantonning of his wife, dzings the poor man behind hand, and doth withall cause a greater inconvenience; for in the end by one means or other, either through her too much boldnes, or her Lovers-want of wariness, the matter at length comes to light, whereof some friend or kinsman gives him notice.

He being tickled by this bad report, thereupon searching further, finds it true, or gathers more likelihood of suspition, that presently infects his thoughts with jealousie, into which mad tormenting humour, no wise man will ever fall: for it is an evil both extreme

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and endless, especially (if it be justly conceived) upon the wives known lewdness, for then there is no hope of curing. She on the other side seeing this, and receiving for her lose life many bitter speeches, doth closely keep on her old course, but now more for spight than pleasure; for it is in vain to think that she will reclaim her self. And if he (hoping by constraint to make her honest) fall to beating her, (though he use never so much severity) he shall but kindle so much more the fire of that lewd love, which she bears unto others: Hereon follows a heap of mischiefs; he grows careless of his business, letting all things run to ruine: she on the other side becomes shameless, converting into deadly hate the love that she should bear him. Judge now what a purgatory of perplexities the poor man doth live in: and yet for all this he is so besotted, that he seems to take great pleasure in his pains, and to be so far in love with Lobs pound, that were he not already in, yet he would make all haste possible to be possessed of the place, there to consume the residue of his life, and miserably end his days.

CHAP. III. The humour of a woman lying in Child bed.

There is another humour incident to a woman, when her husband sees her belly to grow big (though peradventure by the help of some other friend) yet he perswades himself it is a work of his own framing: and this breeds him new cares and troubles, for then must he trot up and down day and night, far and near, to get with great cost that his wife longs for: if she let fall but a pin, he is diligent to take it up, lest she by stooping should hurt her self; She on the other side is so hard to please, that it is a great hap when he fits her humour, in bringing home that which likes her. though he spare no pains nor cost to get it. And oft times through ease and plenty she grows so queasie stomacht, that she can brook no common meats, but long for strange and rare things, which whether they be to be had or no, yet she must have them, there is no remedy. She must have Cherries, though for a pound he pay ten shillings, or green Peascods at four nobles a peck: yea, he must take a horse and ride into the Countrey, to get her green Codlings, when they are scarce so big as a scotch button. In this trouble and vexation of mind and body, lives the silly man for six or seven moneths, all which time his wife doth nothing but complain, and he

poor

poꝛ ſoul takes all the care, riſing early, going late to bed, and to be ſhoꝛt, is fain to play both the husband and the huswife. But when the time dꝛaws near of her lying down, then muſt he trudge to get Goſſips, ſuch as ſhe will appoint, oꝛ elſe all the fat's in the fire. Conſider then what coſt and trouble it will be to him, to have all things fine againſt the Chꝛiſtning day, what ſtoꝛe of Sugar, Biſkets, Comphets and Caraways, Marmalet, and Marchpane, with all kind of ſweet ſuckets and ſuperfluous banquetting ſtuff, with a hundꝛed other odd and needleſs trifles, which at that time muſt fill the pockets of dainty dames: Beſides the charge of the Midwife, ſhe muſt have her nurſe to attend and keep her, who muſt make foꝛ her warm bꝛoths, and coſtly cawdels, enough both foꝛ her ſelf and her miſtreſs; being of the mind to fare no woꝛſe than ſhe: If her miſtreſs be fed with partridge, plover, woodcocks, quails, oꝛ any ſuch like, the nurſe muſt be partner with her in all theſe dainties: neither yet will that ſuffice, but during the whole month ſhe pꝛivily pilfers away the ſugar, the nutmegs and ginger, with all other ſpices that comes under her keeping, putting the poꝛ man to ſuch expence, that in a whole year he can ſcarcely recover that one moneths charges. Then every day after her lying down, will ſundꝛy dames viſit her, which are her neighboꝛs, her kinſwomen, and other her ſpecial acquaintance, whom the good man muſt welcome with all cheerfulneſs, and be ſure there be ſome dainties in ſtoꝛe to ſet befoꝛe them: where they about ſome thꝛee oꝛ four hours (oꝛ poſſibly half a day) will ſit chatting with the Childwife. And by that time the cups of wine have merrily trold about, and half a dozen times moiſtned their lips with the ſweet juyce of the purple grape: They begin thus one with another to diſcourſe; Good Loꝛd neighboꝛ, I marvel how our Goſſip Frees doth, I have no ſeen the good ſoul this many a day.

Oh God help her, quoth another, foꝛ ſhe hath her hands full of woꝛk, and her heart full of heavineſs: While ſhe dꝛudges all the week at home, her husband like an unthꝛift never leaves running abꝛoad to the Tennis court, and dicing houſes, ſpending all that ever he hath in ſuch lewd ſoꝛt: yea, and if that were the woꝛſt it is well: but hear you Goſſip, there is another matter ſpoils all, he cares no moꝛe foꝛ his wife, than foꝛ a dog, but keeps queanes even under her noſe: Jeſu ſaith another, who would think he were ſuch a man, he behaves himſelf ſo oꝛderly and civilly to all mens ſights:

Tuſh

Tush, hold your peace Gossip(saith the other)it is commonly seen, the still sow eats up all the draff, he carries a sooth countenance, but a corrupt conscience: That I know F. well enough, I will not say he loves mistress G. go too Gossip, I drink to you. Yea (and saith another) there goes foul lies if G. himself loves not his maid N. I can tell you their mouths will not be stopt with a bushel of wheat that speak it. Then the third fetching a great sigh, saying, by my troth such another bold Bettress have I at home: for never give me credit Gossip, if I took her not the other day in close conference with her Master; but I think I beswadld my maid in such sort, that she will have small list to do so again. Nay Gossip (saith another) had it been to me, that should not have served her turn, but I would have turned the queen out of doors to pick a Sallet, for wot you what Gossip? It is ill setting fire and flax together: but I pray you tell me one thing, when saw you our friend Mistress C. Now in good sooth she is a kind creature, and a very gentle Heart: I promise you I saw her not since you and I drank a pint of Wine with her in the fish market. O Gossip(saith another) there is a great change since that time, for they have been fain to pawn all that ever they have, and yet God knows her husband lies in prison. O the passion of my heart (saith another) is all their great and glorious shew come to nothing? good Lord what a world is this? Why Gossip (saith another) it was never like to be otherwise, for they loved ever to go fine, and fair daintily, and by my faith Gossip, this is not a world for those matters, and thereupon I drink to you. This is commonly their communication, where they find chear according to their choyce. But if it happen contrary, that they find not things in such plenty and good order as they would wish, then one or other of them will talk to this effect: Trust me gossip, I marvell much and sodo all our other friends, that your Husband is not ashamed to make so small account of you, and this your sweet child if he be such a niggard at the first, what will he be by that time he hath five or six? it doth well appear he bears but little love to you whereas your vouchsafing to match with him hath done him more credit than ever had any of his kindred. Before God, saith another, I had rather see my husbands eyes out then he should serve me so: therefore if you be wise use him not to it: neither in this sort let him tread you under foot: I tell you it is a foul shame for him, and

you

you may be well assured sith he begins thus, hereafter he will use you in the same order, if not worse. In good sooth saith the third it seems very strange to me that a wise woman, and one of such parentage as you are, who as all men knows, is by blood far his better, can indure to be thus used by a base companion. Blame us not to speak, good Gossip, for I protest the wrong that he doth you doth likewise touch us, and all other good women that are in your case.

This Child-wife hearing all this, begins to weep, saying: Alas Gossip, I know not what to do or how to please him, he is so divers and wayward a man, and besides he thinks all too much that is spent. Gossip he is (said one) a bad and a naughty man, and so it is well seen by your usage. All my Gossips here can tell, that when I was married to my husband, every one said that he was so hasty and hard to please, that he would kill me with grief: and indeed I may say to you, I found him crabbed enough: for he began to take upon him mightily, and thought to have wrought wonders, yet I have used such means that I have tamed my young master, and have at this present brought him to that passe, that I dare swear he had rather lose one of his joints than wrangle with me: I will not deny but once or twice he beat me shrewdly, which I, God wot, being young and tender, took in grievous part, but what he got by it let my Gossip T. report, who is yet a woman living, and can tell the whole story: to whom my good man within a while after said, that I was past remedy. and that he might sooner kill me: than do any good by beating me, (and by these ten bones so he shall) but in the end I brought the matter so about, that I got the bridle into my own hands, so that I may now say I do what I list: for be it right or wrong, if I say it he will not gain-say it; for by this Gold on my finger, let him do what he can, I will be sure to have the last word; so that in very deed, if that women be made underlings by their husbands, the fault is their own: For there is not any man alive (be he never so churlish) but his wife may make him quiet and gentle enough, if she have any wit. And therefore your good man serves you but well enough, sith you will take it so.

Believe me Gossip (saith another) were I in your case, I would give him such welcome at his coming home, and ring such a peale of bad words in his ears, that he should have small joy to stay the hearing.

Thus

Thus is the poꝛ man handled behind his back, whiles they make no ſpare to help away with his good wine and ſugar (which he hath pꝛepared,) whom they foꝛ his kindneſs thus ingratefully requite: yea, and now and then having their bꝛains well heated, they will not ſtick to taunt him to his face: accuſing him of little love and great unkindneſs to his wife.

Now it doth many times ſo chance, that he having bæn foꝛth to pꝛovide ſuch meats as ſhe would have, he cometh home (perhaps at midnight) and befoꝛe he ſitteth down to reſt himſelf, hath a very earneſt deſire to know how his wife doth, and perchance being loth to lie abꝛoad, becauſe of expence, tꝛavels the later, that he may ꝛeach to his own houſe where (when he is once come) he asketh ẏ Chambermaid, oꝛ elſe the Nurſe, how his wife doth: they having their errand befoꝛe given them by their Miſtreſs, anſwers, ſhe is very ill at eaſe, and that ſince his departure ſhe taſted not one bit of meat: but that towards ẏ evening ſhe began to be a little better, all which be mær lyes. But the poꝛ man hearing theſe woꝛds, gꝛieves not a little, though he be all to be moyld, weary and wet, having gone a long journey thꝛough a bad and filthy way upon ſome ill paced tꝛotting Jade, and may be is faſting too: yet will he neither eat noꝛ dꝛink, (noꝛ ſo much as once ſit down) till he have ſæn his Wife; Then the idle pꝛatling Nurſe, which is not to learn to exploit ſuch a piece of ſeꝛvice, begins to look veꝛy heavily, and to ſigh inwaꝛdly as though heꝛ Miſtreſs had bæn that day at ẏ point of death; which he ſæing, was the moꝛe earneſt to viſit his wife: whom at the entrance of the Chamber, he hears lye gꝛoaning to heꝛ ſelf, and coming to the bed ſide, kindly ſits down by heꝛ, ſaying, how now my ſweet heart, how doſt thou? Ah husband (quoth ſhe) I am veꝛy ill, noꝛ was I eveꝛ ſo ſick in my life, as I have bæn this day. Alas good ſoul (ſaith he) I am the moꝛe ſoꝛꝛy to heaꝛ it. I pꝛay thæ tell me where lies thy pain? Ah husband (quoth ſhe) you know I have bæn weak a long time, and not able to eat any thing. But Wife (quoth he) why did you not cauſe the Nurſe to boyl you a Capon, and make a meſs of good bꝛoth foꝛ you? So ſhe did (ſaid his wife) as well as ſhe could, but it did not like me God wot, and by that means I have eaten nothing, ſince the bꝛoth which your ſelf made me: Ah me thought that was excellent good.

Marry Wife (ſaith he) I will pꝛeſently make you ſome moꝛe of

the same, and you shall eat it for my sake. With all my heart good husband (saith she) and I shall think my self highly beholden unto you. Then trudgeth he into the Kitchin, there playes he the Cook, burning and broiling himself over the fire, having his eyes ready to be put out with smoak while he is busie in making the broth: what time he chides with his maids, calling them beasts and baggages, that knows not how to do any thing: not so much as make a little broth for a sick body, but he must bee fain to do it himself. Then comes down Mistress Purse as fine as a farthing fiddle, in her petticoat and girtle, having a white wastcoat, with a flaunting cambrick Ruffe about her neck; who like a Doctress in faculty, comes thus upon him. Good Lord sir, what pains you take, here is no body can please our Mistress but your self: I will assure you (on my credit) that I do what I can, yet for my life, I cannot any way content her. Moreover here came in mistress Cot, and mistress Cen. who did both of them what they could to have your Wife eat something: Nevertheless, all they did could not make her taste one spoonful of any thing all this live-long day: I know not what she ayls: I have kept many women in my time, both of worship, and credit, (simple though I stand here) but I never knew any so weak as she is: I, I (quoth he) you are a company of cunning Cooks, that cannot make a little broth as it should be. And by this time the broth being ready, he brings it straight to his wife, comforting her with many kind words, praying her to eat for his sake, or taste a spoonful or twain, which she doth, commending it to the Heavens, affirming also that the broth which the others made had no good taste in the world, and was nothing worth. The good man hereof being not a little proud, bids them make a good fire in his wives chamber, charging them to tend her well. And having given this direction, he gets himself to supper with some cold meat set before him, such as the Gossips left, or his Purse could spare, and having this short pittance he goes to bed full of care.

The next morning he gets him up betimes, and comes very kindly to know how his wife doth, who presently pops him in the mouth with a smooth lye: saying that all night she could take no rest till it grew towards the morning, and then she began to feel a little more ease, when God knows she never slept more soundly in all her life. Well wife, (said the good man) you must remember that this night

is

is our goſsips ſupper, and they will come hither with many other of our friends, therefore we muſt prouide ſome good thing for them, eſpecially becauſe it is your vpſitting and a fortnight at leaſt ſince you were brought to bed: but good wife let us go as near to the World as we may, ſeeing that our great charge doth every day increaſe, and mony was never ſo ill to come by.

She hearing him ſay ſo, begins to pout, ſaying; would for my part I had died in trauel. and my poor infant bene ſtrangled in the birth, ſo ſhould you not be troubled with us at all, nor haue cauſe to repine ſo much at our ſpending: I am ſure there is neuer a woman in the world, that in my caſe hath worſe keeping or is leſs chargeable, yet let me pinch and ſpare, and do what I can all is thought too much that I haue: Truſt me I care not a ſtraw whether you prouide me any thing or no, although the ſorrow be mine, the ſhame will be yours, as yeſterday for example: I am ſure here came in aboue a dozen of our neighbours and friends of meer kindneſs to ſee me, and know how I did, who by their countenance and comming, did you greater credit then you deſerue: But God knows what entertainment they had, hauing nothing in the houſe to ſet before them which made me ſo much aſhamed, that I knew not what to ſay: I tell you what, before God I may boldly ſpeak it, (for I haue ſeen it) that when any one of them lies in, their very ſeruants haue better fare then I my ſelf haue had at your hands, which they ſeeing (betwixt themſelues yeſterday) when they where here, did moſt cunningly flout both you and me for their entertainment. I haue not (as you know) lien in aboue fifteen days, & can yet ſcant ſtand on my legs and you think the time too long till I be moyling about the houſe (to earch my bane,) as I fear I haue done already. Beleeue me wife (quoth he) you miſtake me greatly, for no man in the world can be more kind to his wife, then I haue done already. Kind to me (quoth ſhe) by the maſſe that you haue with a murren: no doubt but I haue had a ſweet meſſe of cheriſhing at your hands, but I ſee your drift well enough, you gape every day for my death, and I would to God it were ſo for me: the month end is half expired, and I fear thereſt will come before we be ready for it: my ſiſter S. was here no longer ago then to day, and askt if I had euer a new Goun to be Churched in, but God wot I am far enough from it, neither do I deſire it, though it be a thing which ought both by reaſon & cuſtome to be obſerued.

And because it is your pleasure, I will rise to morrow what chance so ever befall, for the worst is, I can but lose my life: full well may I gather by this, how you will use me hereafter, and what recount you would make of me, if I had nine or ten Children, but God forbid it should ever come to pass, I desire rather to be rid of my life, and to shun the shame of the world, than long to live with such an unkind churl. Now verily wife (saith ỹ good man) I must nedes blame your impatience for growing so cholerick without cause. Without cause quoth she?) do you think I have no just cause to complain? I will assure you there is never a woman of my degree, that would put up the intolerable injuries that I have done, & daily do by means of your hoggish conditions. Well wife, saith the good man, ly as long as you list, and rise when you will, but I pray you tel me how this new Gown may be had which you so earnestly ask for: By my faith (quoth she) you say not well, for I ask nothing at your hands, neither would I have it though I might: I thank God I have gowns enough already, & sufficient to serve my turn, & you know I take no delight in garish attire, for I am past a girle, but it makes me smile to see what a shew of kindness you would fain make: Fie on thee dissembler, you can cog and flatter as well as any man in this Town, and full little think they that see you abroad, what a Devil you are at home: for what with your crooked qualities with toyling, moyling, carking and caring, and being beside broken with Child-bearing, my countenance is quite changed, so that I look already as withered, as the bark of an Elder bough: There is my cousin, T. T. who when I was a little girle, was at a womans estate, and in the end married master H. with whom she leads a Ladies life looking so young and lusty, that I may seem to be her mother, I, I, such is the difference betwixt a kind and an uncourteous husband: and who knows not but he was a suter to me & made many a journey to my fathers house for my sake, and would so fain have had me, that while I was to marry, he would not match himself with any? but so much was I bewitch'd, that after I had once seen you, I would not have changed for the best Lord in the Land, and this I have in recompence of my love and loyalty: Go to wife (saith he) I pray you leave these lavish speeches, and let us all call to mind where we may best take up cloth for your gown: for you see, such is our weak estate, that if we should rashly lay out that little money

money which is in the house, we might possibly be unprovided for all other necessaries: therefore whatsoever should chance hereafter, it is best to keep something against a rainy day: And again, you know within these eight or nine days, I have five pound to pay to master P. which must be done, there is no shift, otherwise I am like to sustain treble dammage. Tush (quoth she) what talke you to me of these matters? alas I ask you nothing, I would to God I were once rid of this trouble: I pray you let me take some rest, for my head akes (God help me) as it should go in pieces, I wis you feel not my pain, and you take little care for my grief: Therefore I pray you send my gossips word that they may not come, for I feel my self very ill at ease. Not so (quoth he) I will never break custome, nor so much as gain-say their courteous offer, they shall come sure, and be entertained in the best manner I may. Wel (quoth she) I would to God you would leave me, that I might take a little rest and then do what you list: Upon these speeches the Nurse straight steps in, and rounds her master in the ear: I pray you Sir do not force her to many words, for it makes her head light, and doth great harm to a woman in her case, especially her brains being so light for want of sleep: and besides she is, God knows, a woman of a tender and choice complexion, and with that she draws the Curtains about the Bed. Thus is the poor man held in suspence, till the next day that the Gossips come, who will play their parts so kindly, and gall him to the quick with their quibs and taunts, that his courage will be wholly quail'd, and be ready (if they should bid him, like the Prodigall Child, eben to eat draffe with the hogs,) rather than he would displease them. But to proceed, he in the mean while is double diligent, to provide all things against their coming, according to his ability, and by reason of his wives words, he buyes more meat, and prepares a great deal better cheer than he thought to have done. At their coming, he is ready to welcome them with his cap in hand, and all the kindness that may be shewed. Then doth he trudge bare headed up and down the house, with a chearful countenance, like a good Asse fit to bear the burthen: he brings the Gossips up to his wife, and coming first to her himself, he tells her of their coming. I wis (quoth she) I had rather they had kept at home, and so they would too, if they knew how little pleasure I took in their coming. Nay I pray you wife (saith he) give them good countenance,

tenance seeing they be come for good will: with this they enter, and after mutual greetings, with much gossips ceremonies, down they sit and there spend the whole day in breaking their fasts, dining and in making an afternoons repast: besides their petty suppings at her beds-side, and at the cradle, where they discharge their parts so well in helping him away with his good wine and sugar, that the poor man comming oft to chear them, doth well perceive it, and grieves inwardly thereat, howsoever, he covers his discontent with a merry countenance. But they not caring how the game goes, take their peniworths of that chear which is before them, never asking how it comes there, and so they merrily pass the time away, prattling, and talking of many good matters. Afterwards the poor man trots up and down anew to get his wife the foresaid gown, & all other things thereto suitable, whereby he sets himself soundly in debt: sometimes he is troubled with the childs brawling, sometimes he is brawl'd at by the nurse: then his wife complains that she was never well since she was brought to bed, then must he cast his cares anew, devising by what means to discharge his debts, and lessen his expences: then resolves he to diminish his own port, and augment his wives bravery, he will go all the year in one suit, and make two pair of shoes serve him in a twelve month, keeping one pair for holydays, another for working dayes, and one hat in three or four years. Thus according to his own rash desire, he is up to the ears in Lobs pound, and for all the woe and wretchedness that he hath felt, he would not yet be out again, but doth then willingly consume himself in continuall care, sorrow and trouble, til death doth set him free.

CHAP. IV. The humour of a woman that hath a charge of children.

Being tired with scolding, as a hackney Jade with travel.

The next humour that is by nature incident to a woman, is when the husband hath been married nine or ten years, hath five or six children, hath passed many evil dayes, unquiet nights, and troubles aforesaid, hath his lusty youthfulness spent so that it is now high time for him to repent: But such is his gross folly that he cannot, and such is his dulness through the continual vexations, which have tamed and wearied him, that he cares not whatsoever his wife saith or doth, but is hardned like an old Ass, which being used to the whip, will not once mend his pace, be he lashed never so much

much: The poor man seeth two or three of his daughters marriageable, which is soon known by their wanton tricks, their playing, dancing, and other youthful toys, but he keeps them back, having perhaps small commings in, to keep, maintain and furnish them as they look for, with gowns, kirtles, linnen, and other ornaments, as they should bee for three causes. First, that they may be the sooner sued unto by lusty gallants: Secondly, because his denying hereof should nothing avail: for his wife which knows her daughters humours by her own, when she was of the like years, will see that they shall want nothing. Thirdly they peradventure, bearing right womens minds, if their Father keeps them short, will find some other friends that shall offer it them. The poor man being thus perplexed on all sides by reason of the excessive charges which he must be at, will (as it is likely) be but honestly attired himself, not caring how he goes so he may but rub out, be it never so barely, and would be glad to scape so: But as the fish in the pond, which would also think himself well, though wanting former liberty, if he might be suffered to continue, is cut off before his time: So is likewise this poor man served, being once plunged in the perplexing pond or rather pound of wedlock and house-keeping: for howsoever when he considers the aforesaid charges and troubles, he begins to have no joy of himself, and is no more moved than a tyred Jade, which forceth not for the spur: Yet for the furnishing of his wife and daughters, so that he may have peace at home, and injoy an ease bondage, he must trudge up and down early and late abut his business in that course of life which he professeth.

Sometimes he journeys thirty or forty miles off, about his affairs: Another time twice so far to the Term or Assises, concerning some old matter in law, which was begun by his grandfather, and not yet towards an end: he puts on a pair of boots of seven years old, which have been cobled so oft that they are now a foot too short for him, so that the top of the boot reaches no further than the calf of his leg, he hath a pair of spurs of the old making whereof the one wants a rowell, and the other for want of leathers, is fastned to his foot with a point: He puts a laced coat on his back, which he hath had six or seven years, which he never wore but upon high dayes, whose fashion is grown clean out of request, by reason of new invented garments: whatsoever sports

or

or pleasures he lights on (by the way on his journey) he takes no joy in them because his mind is altogether on his troubles at home: he fares hard by the way, as also his poor horse (if he have one) his man follows him in a turn'd sute with a sword by his side, which was found under a hedge at the siege of Bulleine; he hath a coat on his back, which every man may know was never made for him, or he not present when it was cut out: for the wings on his shoulders come down half way his arm, & his skirts as much below his wast; To be short, the poor man goes every way as near as may be, for he remembers at what charges he is at home, and knows not what it will cost him in feeing his Counsellors, Attorneys, Pettyfoggers, which will do nothing without present pay: he dispatcheth his business spædily, and hies him home, with such hast to avoid greater charges, that he rests no where by the way. And hereby it chanceth that many times he comes home at such an hour, as is as nær morning as to night, and findes nothing to eat, for his wife and servants are in bed, all which he takes patiently, being now well used to such entertainment: Surely for my part, I think that God sends such adversity and distress to those only whose good and mild nature he knows to be such, that they will take all things in good part.

But to proceed, it is very likely that the poor man is very weary, his heart heavy, by reason of the care and thought which he hath of his business: and it may be (he looks to be welcome to his own house, and there to refresh himself) howsoever he forgets not his former usage. But it falls out otherwise, for his wife begins to chidee whose words carry such a sway with the servants, that whatsoever their master saith, they make small account of it: but if their mistress command any thing, it is presently done, and her humour followed in all things, else must they pack out of service; so that it boots not him to bid them do any thing, or rebuke them for not doing it: And his poor man that hath bæn with him dares not likewise open his mouth to call for any victualls to comfort himself, or for the horses, lest they should suspect him to be of his masters faction (who being wise and of a quiet mild nature) is loth to make any stir, or brced any disquietness in the house, and therefore takes all in good part, and sits down far from the fire, though hæ be very cold: But his wife and children stand round about it, but all

their

their eyes are cast on her, who looks on her husband with an angry countenance, not caring to provide ought for his supper: but contrariwise taunts him with sharp and shrewd speeches, whereto for the most part, he answers not a word, but sometimes (perhaps being urged through hunger or wearinesse, or unkindnesse of his wife) he doth thus utter his mind. Well wife you can look well enough to your self, but as for me, I am both weary and hungry, having neither eaten nor drunk n all this day, and being beside wet to the very skin, yet you make no reckoning to provide any thing for my supper.

Ah, (quoth she) you do well to begin first, lest I should, which have most cause to speak: have you not done very well (think ye) to take your man with you, and leave me no body to white the cloathes? Now before god, I have more loss in my linnen, than you will get this twelve month: Moreover, you shut the Hen Roust door very well, did you not? When the Fox got in, and eat up four of my best brood Hens, as you (to your cost will soon find) by the masse, if you live long you will be the poorest of all your kin. Well wife (saith the good man) use no such words, I pray, God you be thanked I have enough, and more shall have when it pleaseth him: and I tell you, I have good men of my kin. But quoth she, I know not where they be, nor what they are worth. Well (saith he) they are of credit and ability too. But for all that (quoth she) they do you small good. As much good (saith he) as any of yours. As any of mine (saith she) and that she spake with such a high note, that the house rung withall, saying. By cockes soul, were it not for my friends you would do but sorrily.

Well good wife (saith he) let us leave this talk: Nay (saith she) if they heard what you said, they would answer you well enough. The good man holds his peace, fearing lest she should tell them, being of greater ability then he was, and besides, because he was loth that they should be offended with him. Then one of the three children fals a crying, and he perhaps which his father loved best, threupon the mother presently took a rod, turnd up the childs tail, and whipt him well favouredly; and the more to despight anger her husband than for ought else. The good man being therewith somewhat moved, wills her to leave beating the child, shewing by his bended brows that he was not a little angry at her doings. Now gyp with a murren (qd. she) you are not troubled with them, they cost you nothing, but it is

I that have all the pains with them night and day. Then comes in the Nurse with her verdict, and thus she begins, saying O Sir, you know not what a hand she hath with them & we also that tend them. Then comes in the chamber-maid with her five egs, In good faith Sir it is a shame for you, that at your coming home, when all the whole house should be glad thereof, that you should contrary wise put it thus out of quiet: saith he (Is it I that make this stir?)

Then is the whole household against him, when he seeing himself thus baited on all sides, (and the match so unequall,) gets him to bed quietly without his supper, all wet and dirty; or if he do sup, he hath but thin fair: and being in bed where he should take his rest, he is so disquieted with the childzen, whom the nurse and his wife do on purpose set on crying, to anger him the more, that for his life he cannot sleep one wink.

Thus is he vexed with continual troubles, wherewith he seemeth to be well pleased, and would not though he might be free from them but doth therein spend his miserable and unhappy life.

CHAP. V. The humour of a woman that marries her inferiour by birth.

A Woman inclined to another kind of humour, which is, when the husband hath been married, and hath passed so many troubles, that he is wearied therewith, his lusty youthful blood grown cold: is matched with a wife of better birth then himself, and perhaps younger, both which things are very dangerous, and no wise man should seek his own spoyl, by wrapping himself in either of those bonds, because they are so repugnant, that it is both against reason and nature to accord them. Sometimes they have childzen, sometimes they have none; yet this notwithstanding, the wife can take no pains, yet must be maintained according to her degree, to the husbands exceeding charges: for the furnishing whereof, the poor man is forced to take extream toil and pains, and yet for all this thanks God for vouchsafing him so great a grace, as to be matcht with her: If now and then they grow to hot words together (as oft it happens) then presently in upbraiding and menacing sort, she tells him that her friends did not match her to him to be his drudge, and that she knows well enough of what linage she is come, and will brag

brag withall, that when she list to write to her friends and kinsmen, they will presently fetch her away. Thus doth she keep him in awe, and in a kind servitude, by telling him of them, who would perhaps have matcht her better, and not with him, but for some privy scape that she hath had before, whereof the poor soul knows nothing; or if perhaps he hath heard some inkling thereof, yet because he is simple, the credit that he might give thereunto is quite dasht, by a contrary tale of others suborn'd by them, who perchance will not stick to swear that this is a slaunder rais'd by evil tongues, and forced maliciously against her, as the like is done against many other good women, whose good names are wronged, & brought in question by bad persons on their tipling bench because themselves cannot obtain their purpose of them: notwithstanding, if her husband be not able to maintain her according to her mind, then will she be sure to have a friend in store that shall offer it her, if her husband deny it, and in the end she remembers that such a Gentleman at such a feast profered her a Diamond, or sent her by a messenger some twenty or thirty crowns, which she as then refused, but now purposeth to give him a kind glance to renew his affection, who conceiving some better hope, and meeting soon after with her Chamber-maid, as she is going about some business, calls to her, saying: Sister I would fain speak with you. Sir quoth she say what you please. You know (quoth he) that I have long loved your Mistres without obtaining any favour: but tell me I pray you, did she never speak of me in your hearing? In faith sir (saith he) never but well: I dare swear she wishes you no harm. Before God sister, saith the Gentleman, if you will shew me some kindnes herein, and do my commendations to your mistres, assuring her of my love and loyalty, it should be worth a new gown unto you, mean while take this in earnest; with that he offers her a piece gold; she then making a low curtse, saith Sir, I thank you for your good will, but will not take it; By my faith saith he, but you shall, and with that he forceth it on her; adding these words: I pray you let me hear from you to morrow morning. She being glad of such a booty hies her home, and tels her mistres how she met with a gentleman that was in a passing good vein, & to be short after some questions used by her mistres, it appears to be the very same man whom she would fain entrap. I tell thee, saith she to her maid, if he be as kind as he is proper, he were worthy to be any wo-

mans love. Believe me mistres (saith the maid) his very countenance shews that he is kind, it seemes that he was only made for love, and withall he is wealthy, and thereby able to maintain her beauty and her person in bravery whom he affects. By this light (saith the mistres) I can get nothing of my husband. The more unwise you (saith the maid) to be used so. Alas quoth she what shall I do? I have had him so long, that I cannot now set my heart on any other. Tush (quoth the maid) it a folly of any woman to set her heart so on any man, for you know they care not how they use us when they are once lords over us. Beside, your husband, though he would yet he cannot maintain and keep you according to your degree: but he of whom I speak will furnish and maintain you gallantly, what garments soeber he will have: and what colour and fashion soeber you like best you shall presently have it, so that there wants nothing else, save only a quaint excuse to my Master, making him believe you had it by some other means. By my troth quoth her mistres, I know not what to say. Well Mistres (saith the maid) advise you well, I have promist to give him an answer to morrow morning. Alas (saith the other,) how shall we do? Tush mistres, answers the maid, let me alone: As I go to morrow to the market, I am sure he will watch to meet with me, that he may know what news: then I will tell him that you will not agree to his desire for fear of discredit, this will give him a little hope and so we shall fall into further talk, and I doubt not but to handle the matter well enough. According to promise next morning to market she hies, somewhat more early then she was wont, and by the way she meets with this lusty gallant, who had waited for her at least three hours: he hath no sooner spied her, but he presently makes towards her, and at her coming thus salutes her: Sister, good morrow, what news I pray, and how doth your fair Mistres? In faith Sir, (saith she) she is at home very pensive and out of patience; I think that never any woman had such a froward husband. Ah bi lain (saith he) the Devil take him. Amen (saith the maid) for both my mistres and all the servants are weary with tarrying with him, Put on him slave (saith he) but I pray you tell me what answer gave your Mistres touching my suit? In faith (quoth she) I spake unto her, but she would not agree thereunto, for she is wonderfully afraid to purchase her self discredit, and is besides plagued with such a froward and suspi-

tious

tious husband, and although she were never so willing, yet could she not, being continually watcht by him, his mother and brethren: I think on my conscience, unless that it were that she spake to you the other day, the poor woman talkt not with any man these four months; yet she speaks very often of you, and I am well assured that if she would bend her mind to love, she would chuse you before all men in the World. He being ravished with these words, replyes thus, Sweet sister, I pray you be my friend herein, and I will alwayes rest at your command. In good faith (saith she) I have done more for you already, then ever I did for any man in my life. And think not (saith he) that I will be unmindfull of your kindness, but what would you counsell me to do? In faith Sir (saith she) I think it best that you should speak with her your self, and now you have an excellent opportunity, for my master hath refused to give her a gown, whereat she storms not a little, you shall do well therefore to be to morrow at the Church, and there salute her, telling her boldly your desire: you may also offer her what you think good, but I know she will take nothing: marry she will think the better of you, knowing thereby your frank and bountiful nature. Oh, (saith he) I would she would gladly take that which I would gladly bestow on her. Nay, answers the maid, I know she will not, for you never knew a more honester woman: but I'le tell ye how ye may do it afterwards: Look what you purpose to bestow upon her, you shall deliver unto me, I will do my best to perswade her to take it: but I cannot assure you that I shall prevail. Surely sister (saith he) this is very good counsell, herewithall they part, and she returns home, laughing to her self; which her mistress seeing, demands of her the cause thereof. Marry (saith the maid) this lusty gentleman is all on fire, to morrow he will be at Church, purposing there to speak with you; now must you demean your self wisely, and make very strange of it, but stand not off too much, lest you dismay him clean: as you will not wholly grant, so must you feed him with some hope. She having her lesson thus taught by her maid gets her up betimes the next morning, and to the Church she goes, where this amorous Gallant hath waited for her comming ever since four a clock. She being set in her Pew, makes shew as if she were devoutly at her prayers, when (God wot) her devotion is bent to the service of

another.

another Saint: it were worth the noting to see how like an image she sits: and yet for all her demurenesse, she applyes all her five senses, and that full zealously in this new humour of religion. To be short, he steals unto her sneaking unto her from the belfrey unto her Pew, and being come, greetes her after the amorous order, and from greeting he falls to courting, whereto she doth in no wise yeild consent, neither will she take ought that she offers, yet answers him after such a sort that he doth assuredly gather that she loveth him thereby, and sticks only for fear of discredit: whereat he is not a little jocund, and having spent his time to so good a purpose, he takes his leave and she hasting home to her Counsellour, acquaints her what hath passed betweene them; who thereupon takes occasion to say thus, Mistres, I know well that now he longs to speak with me, but at our meeting I will tell him that you will yeild to nothing for which I will fain my self sorry: And I will add withall, that my master is gon out of town, and will appoint him to come hither towards the evening, with promise that I will let him in, and convey him so secretly into your Chamber, that you shall know nothing thereof. At what time you must seem to be highly offended, and if you be wise, you will make him buy his pleasure with some cost, which will cause him to esteem the more of you; Tell him that you will cry out, and then do you call me. By handling him thus, I can assure you that you shall get more of him, than if you had yeilded at the first. All this while I will have in my keeping that which he will give you, for hee hath appointed to deliver it me to morrow, and I will make him believe, that you would by no means take it. But when the matter is brought to this pass, then will I make shew to offer you his gift before him, telling you that he is willing to bestow it on you to buy you a gown cloth withall: Then must you chide, and seem to bee angry with me for receiving it, charging me to deliver it back again to him, but be sure I will lay it up safe enough. Well devised wench (saith the Mistres) I am content it shall be so. This plot being thus laid, the crafty wench goes presently to find out this jolly Gallant, whose first word is, What news?

Now in good faith Sir, (saith she) the matter is no further forwards, then if it were yet to begin: yet because I have medled so far in it, I would be loth I should not bring it about, for I fear that she will complain of me to her husband and friends; but if I could perswade

swade her by any means to receive your gifts, then out of question the matter were dispatcht, and in good faith I'le try once more: I have one good help, and that is this: my master (as I told you before) will not give her a new gown, at which unkindness, she storms mightily.

The hot Lover hearing this, gives her presently twenty Crowns for her good will, whereupon she speaks thus: In good faith sir, I know not how it comes to pass, but sure I am, I never did so much for any man before, as I have done herein for you: See, see Sir, what danger I have put my self in for your sake; for if my Master should have any inckling of it, I were utterly undone: yet for you I will hazard a little further: I know she loves you well, as good hap is my Master is not now in Town, if you therefore will be about the doors toward six of the clock at night, I will let you in, and so convey you secretly into my Mistresses Chamber, who doth sleep very soundly; for you know she is but young: being there I could wish you go to bed to her and for the rest you need not (I trust) any tutor: I protest that I know no other means for the compassing of this matter, perhaps it will fadge: For it is a great matter when a lover and his mistress are both together naked in the dark, which doth help forward a womans conceit to that which in the day time perhaps she would hardly grant. Oh my sweet friend (qd he) for this kindness my purse shall be at thy command. To be short, night comes, he is there according to promise, whom she straight conveyes into her mistresses chamber, then he presently uncloaths himself and steps softly into her bed, and being once in, he begins to imbrace her, hereat she (that seems till then asleep) starts up on a sudden, and with a fearfull voice asks who is there? it is I sweet Mistress, saith he, fear nothing. Ah (qd she) think you to prevail thus? No, no, and with that she makes as though she would rise, and calls her maid who answers not a word, but alas for pitty like an undutiful servant leaves her at her greatest need. She therefore (good woman) seeing that she is forsaken, saith with a sigh. Ah me, I am betrayed: then begin they a stout battell, he urging his advantage, she faintly resisting, but alas, what can a naked woman do against a resolute lover? there is therefore no other remedy, but that at length (poor soul) being out of breath with striving, she must needs yield to the stronger; she would fain have cryed out (God wot) had it not been for fear of dis-

credit

Better then two years wages, and soon got.

Just as *Fermans* lip.

credit: for thereby her name might have been brought in question, therefore all things considered, he doth willingly, God knows, let him supply her husbands place, garnishing his Temples, for pure good will, with Acteons badge. Thus hath she got a new gown, which her good man refused to give her; to blear whose eyes, and keep him from suspition, she gets her mother in her husbands sight to bring home the cloath and give it her, as though it were her cost: lest also he should suspect any thing, shemakes her believe she bought it with the money she got by selling old commodities which her husband knew not of: But it may be (and oft it happens so) that the mother is privy to the whole matter, and a furtherer thereof. After this gown she must have another, and two or three gold imbroidered girdles, and other such costly knacks which the husband seeing, will in the end suspect somewhat, and begin to doubt of his wives honesty, or shall perhaps receive some advertisement thereof from some friend or kinsman: for no such matter can be long kept close, but in the end will by some means or other be made known and discovered: Then falls he into a frantick vein of jealousie, watching his Wives close packing; and for the better finding it out, hee comes home on a sudden about midnight, thinking then to discover all, and yet perhaps may misse his purpose. Another time coming in at unawares he seeth something that he likes not, and then in a fury falls on railing, but be sure that she answers him home, not yeilding an inch unto him; for besides the advantage of the sight, which is waged by her own trusty weapon (her tongue I mean) she knowing withall that she is of better birth; hits him in the teeth therewith and threatens him to tell her friends how badly he doth use her. To be short, the poor man shall never have good day with her, but either with thought of her incontinency, or if he speak to her, he is born down with scolding lyes, and despised of his own servants: his state runs to ruine, his health decayes, his body dryes up, and wears away with grief, he growes desperate and careless. Thus is he plunged in Lobs pound, wearied in a world of discontents, wherein notwithstanding he takes delight, having no desire to change his state: but rather if he were out, and knew what would follow, yet would he never rest till he had gotten in again, there to spend and end (as now he must) his life in grief and misery.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI. The humour of a woman that strives to master her husband.

THe next humour whereunto a woman is addicted, is, when the husband hath got a fair young wife, who is proper and fine in whom he takes great delight: yet perhaps she is bent altogether to crosse and thwart: the man being of a kind and mild nature loving her intirely, & maintains her as well as he can, notwithstanding her frowardnes: it may be also that she hath care of his credit and honesty and doth abhor such lewdnesse as she of whom we speak before did use, yet hath she nevertheless an extream desire of Soveraignty, (which is known a common fault amongst women) and to be her husbands commander, & a busie medler in his matters: be he a Judge, a Nobleman, or Gentleman, she will take upon her to give sentence, and answer tutors, and whatsoever she doth he must stand to it.

This is (I say) a generall imperfection of women be they never so honestly, never so kindly used, and have never so much wealth and ease, to strive for the breeches, and be in odde contrary humours, of purpose to keep her husband in continuall thought and care how to please her.

He gets him up betimes in the morning, leaving her in bed to take her ease, while he stirs about the house, and dispatcheth his businesse, look to the servants that they loyter not, causeth dinner to be made ready, the cloth to be laid, and when all things are ready, he sends one to desire her to come down, who brings back answer that she is not disposed to dine. Nay (saith he) I will never sit down nor eat a bit till she be here: So receiving his second message by his maid, or perhaps by one of his children; replies thus: Go tell him again that I will not dine to day. He hearing this is not yet satisfied but sends likewise the third time, and in the end goes himself, and thus begins: How now, what ails you Wife, that you will eat no meat? hereto she answers not a word. The poor man marvells to see her in this melancholy dump, (although perhaps she hath plaid this pageant many times before) and useth all intreaty he may, to know of her the cause thereof: but in vain, for indeed there is no cause at all, but onely a meer mockery: Sometimes she wil persist so obstinately in this humour, that for all the perswasions and kindnesse that he can use, she

will not come. Sometimes it may be she will, and then he must lead her by the hand like a Bride, and set her chair ready for her, mean while it is so long before he can get her down, that the meat is cold when it comes to the table. Being set, she will not eat one bit, and he seeing that (like a kind Asse) will fast likewise: whereat she smiles inwardly, having brought him so to her bow, first in crossing him, then in making him fast from dinner: wherein (to say the truth) she hath reason, for what needs a woman to seek his favour, who doth already love her, and shew her all the kindnesse that he can. Sometimes the good man riding abroad about his businesse, meets with two or three of his friends, with whom perhaps he hath some dealings, and hath been long acquainted with them: It may be also that he invites them home to his house, as one friend will do to another, and sends his man before to his wife to make all things ready in the best sort that she can for their entertainment: the poor serving-man gallops in such haste, that both himself and his horse is all on a sweat, when he comes home he doth his errand to his Mistress, telling her withall that the guests which his master brings are men of good account. Now by my faith (saith she) I will not meddle in it, he thinks belike that I have nothing else to do, but drudge about to prepare banquets for his companions, he should have come himself with a vengeance and why did he not? Forsooth (saith the servant) I know not, but thus he bad me tell you. Go to (saith she) you are a knave that meddles in more matters then you have thank for. The poor fellow hearing this holds his peace, she in a fume flings up into her chamber, and which is worse, sends out her servants, some one way, some another: as for his maids, they have their lesson taught them well enough, knowing by custome how to behave themselves to weary their Master: well he comes home with his afore-said friends, calls presently for some of his servants: but one of the maids makes answer of whom he demands whether all things be ready: In good faith Sir my Mistress is very sick, and here is no body else can do any thing: with that he being angry leads his friends into the Hall, or some other place according to his estate, where he finds neither fire made, nor cloath laid. Judge then in what a taking he is, although it may be that his friends perceived by the sending of his man, that his commandments were not of such force as an act of Parliament. The good man being ashamed, cals and gapes first for

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one man, then for another, and yet for all this there comes none, except it be the scullion or some chare-woman, that doth use his house, whom his wife hath left there of purpose, because she knew they could serve to do nothing. Being herewith not a little moved, up he goes into his wives chamber, and thus he speaks unto her: Gods precious woman, why have you not done as I will'd ye? Why (saith he) you appoint so many things to be done, that I know not what to do. Before God (saith he) and with that he scratches his head, you have done me a greater displeasure than you think: these are the dearest friends that I have, and now here is nothing to set before them. Why (quoth she) what would you have me to do? I wis if you cast your care well you shall find that we have no need to make banquets: I would to God you were wiser, but sith you will needs be so lusty, even goe throw with it your self on Gods name: for Ile not meddle with it. But what the Devil mean ye (saith he) to send all the servants abroad? Why (quoth she) what did I know that you will need them now? yet did she know it well enough, and had of purpose sent them forth on fæbelese errands, the more to anger and dispight him: who seeing that he can prevail nothing, gives over talking to her, and gets him down in a bitter chafe: for it may be that his guests be of such account, and he so much beholding unto them that he had rather have spent an hundred crowns than it should so have fallen out. But she cares not a whit, being well assured, that howsoever she thwarts him, he will hold his hands, and in scolding she knows her self to be the better. To be short, the poor man being vexed with shame and anger, runs up and down the house, gets as many of his servants together as he can: If his provision be but slender at home, he sends presently abroad; in the mean while he calls for a clean towel, the best table-cloth, and wrought napkins. But the maid answers him, that he can have none. Then up to his wife goes he again, and tells her that her friends do intreat her to come down and bear them company, shewing her what a shame it is and how discourteously they would take it if she come not: And finally, he useth all the fairest speeches that he can to have her come and to welcome and entertain them for his credits sake. Nay in faith (quoth she) I will not come, they are too great states for my company, and no doubt they would scorn a poor woman as I am. It may be she will go, but in such sort, and with such a countenance,

that it had bæn better for him she had not come at all, for his friends will somewhat perceive by her looks, and gesture, that howsoever they be welcome to the good man, she had rather have their room than their company. But if she refuse to come (as it is the more likely) then will he ask her for the best towel, table-cloth and napkins. Napkins (quoth she) as though those that be abroad already be not good enough for greater and better men than they are: when my brother or any of my kinsmen come, which are I wis their equals in every respect, they can be contented to be served with them: but were these your guests never so great, yet could I not now fulfill your request though my life should lie on it: for since morning I have lost my keys of the great chest where all the linnen lies. I pray you bid the maid look for them, for in good truth I know not what I
yar, have done with them; and no marvel, for I have so much to do, that I know not how to bestir my self, well I wot, I have spoyled my self with continual care and trouble.

Now in good faith (quoth he) you have drest me fairly, but it is no matter: Before God Ile break open the Chest: Now surely then (quoth she) you shall do a great act, I would fain see you do it, I would for my part you would break all the Chests in the house. The poor man hearing her in these tearms, knows not well what to do, but takes that which he next lights on, and therefore shifts as well as he can; he causeth his guests to sit down at the table, and because the beer then abroach is on tilt, and therefore not very good, he bids one of the servants broach a new barrell and fill some fresh drink but then there is neither tap nor spigget to be found, for his wife of purpose had hidden them out of the way. Towards the end of the dinner he calls for cheese, and fruit, but there is none in the house, so that he is fain to send to his neighbours for the same, or else be utterly destitute: mean while his boy being at the table with the guests at last tells them how his Mistress fains her self sick, because she is not pleased with their Masters coming. Well, when bed time comes, he can get no clean sheets nor pillowbeers, because forsooth the keyes are lost, so that they must be content to lye in those that be foul, and have bæn long lain in. The next morning they get them gone betimes seeing by the good wives countenance that they are nothing welcome. By the way their lackies tell them what the Gentlemans boy reported, whereat they laught heartily, yet find them-

selves

selves agrieved, vowing never to be his guest any more. The husband also getting him up betimes in the morning goes presently to his wife, and thus begins: By Jesus wife, I muse what you mean to use me thus, I know not how to live with you. Then she replies, saying: How God for his mercy, am I so troublesome? Got wot I am every day (poor soul) troubled with keeping the hogs, your Geese, your chickens, I must card, I must spin, and continually keep the house, look to the servants, and never sit still, but toyling up and down to shorten my days, and make me dye before my time, and yet I cannot have one hours rest or quietness with you, but you are always brawling, and do nothing your self, but spend and waste your goods and mine with odde companions. What odde companions (saith he) as though you know not that these are such men, as can either much further or much hinder me: It is a signe that you deal very well that you must stand in distress of such persons. Hereupon she takes occasion to rail and scold all the day long: the man being wearied with her wawardness, and age (being hasted with grief and sorrow) doth unawares overtake him. Briefly, he is in every respect wretched: but such is his folly, that he reckons his pains pleasure, and would not though he might, be again at liberty, out of Lobs pound or if he would, it is now too late: for he must of force continue there, in care, thought, and misery, till death make an end of him and them together.

CHAP. VII. The humour of a covetous minded Woman.

THe next humour belonging to a woman is, when the Husband is matched to a modest civil woman, who is nothing given to that thwarting and crossing humour whereof I spake before. But be she good or bad, this is a general rule, many wives hold and stedfastly believe, that their own Husbands are worst of all others. It oft happens that when they match together, they are both young, and entertain each other with mutual delights, so much as may be, for a year or two or longer, till the vigour of youth grow cold. But the woman droops not so soon as the man: the reason whereof is, because she takes no care, thought, nor grief, breaks not her sleep, and troubles not her head as he doth but doth wholly addict her thoughts

to

to pleaſure and ſolace. I deny not that when a woman is with child ſhe bides many times great pains, and is often very ill at eaſe, and at the time of her deliverance, ſhe is for the moſt part, not onely in exceeding pain, but alſo in no leſs danger of death: But all this is nothing to the husbands troubles, on whoſe hands alone doth reſt the whole charge and weight of maintaining the houſe, and diſpatching all matters, which is oftentimes intangled ſo with controverſies, and ſo thwarted with croſs fortune, that the poor man is tormented with all vexations of mind.

Being thus wearyed, and as it were worn away with continual grief, troublous cogitations, toyl and travel, he hath no mind on any other pleaſure: whereas ſhe on the other ſide is as luſty as ever ſhe was: mean while his ſtock decays, and his ſtate grows worſe and worſe: and as that diminiſheth, ſo he muſt perforce ſhorten her allowance and maintenance, which is almoſt as great a Torroſive to her, as the former: You may be well aſſured, that this change in him makes her alſo change her countenance, from mirth and cheerfulneſs to lowring melancholy, ſeeking occaſions of diſagreements, and uſe them in ſuch ſort, that their former love and kindneſs was not ſo great, as are now their brawls, jars, and diſcords. It doth alſo oftentimes happen, that the Woman by this means waſts and conſumes all, giving lewdly away her husbands goods, which he with great pains and cares hath gotten. The good man, he goes every way as near as he can, and wearily contains himſelf within his bounds, caſting up what his yearly revenues are, or what his gains is by his profeſſion, be it merchandiſe or other, and then what his expences be: which he finding greater then his comings in, begins to bite the lip and becomes very penſive: his wife and he being afterwards private together in their chamber, he ſpeaks thereof unto her in this manner: In faith wife. I much marvel how it comes to paſs that our goods go away thus, I know not how: I am ſure I am as carefull as man can be, I cannot find in my heart to beſtow a new cloak on my ſelf, and all to ſave money. By my troth Husband (ſaith ſhe) I do as much marvel at it as you, I am ſure for mine own part, that I go as near in houſe-keeping every day as I can.

To be ſhort, the poor man not doubting his wife, nor ſuſpecting her ill carriage, after long care and thought concludes, that the cauſe thereof is his own ill fortune, which keeps him down, and croſſeth

all

all his actions with contrary ſucceſſe, but it may be that in proceſſe of time, ſome friend of his (being more clear ſighted in the matter) perceiving all goes not will, doth privily informe him thereof, who being aſtoniſhed at his report, gets him home with a heavy countenance, which the wife ſeing, and knowing her ſelf guilty, begins preſently to doubt the worſt, and perhaps ghеſſeth ſhrewdly at the author thereof; but howſoever: ſhe will take ſuch an order, that ſhe will be ſure to eſcape the brunt well enough.

The good man will not preſently make any words hereof unto her, but defer it a while, and try in the mean time whether he can (of himſelfe) gather any further likelihood: for which purpoſe he will tell her, that he muſt nеds ride ſome ten or twelve miles out of Town about ſome earneſt buſineſſe. Good faith husband (ſaith ſhe) I had rather you would ſend your man, and ſtay at home your ſelf. Not ſo wife (ſaith he) but I will be at home again my ſelf within theſe three or four days: Having told her this tale, he makes as though he took his journey, but doth privily lie in ambuſh in ſuch a place, where he may know whatſoever is done in the houſe: But ſhe ſmelling his drift, ſends word to her ſweet-heart, that he doe not come in any caſe, and all the time of his deſembled abſence, ſhe carries her ſelf ſo that it gives no likelihood of ſuſpition: which the filly man ſeing, comes out of his ambuſh, enters his houſe, making as if then he were returned from his journey? And whereas before he lowred now ſhews a cheerful countenance, being verily perſwaded that his friends report is a meer lye, and that he thinks ſo much the rather, becauſe ſhe doth at his coming run to meet him, with ſuch a ſhew of love, and doth ſo imbrace and kiſſe him that it ſeems impoſſible ſo kind a creature ſhould play falſe: But long after (being in bed together) he thus ſpeaks to her:

Wife, I have heard reported certain words that like me not. Good faith husband (ſaith ſhe) I know not what is the cauſe thereof: I have noted this great while that you have bin very penſive, & was afraid that you had had ſome great loſſe, or that ſome of your friends had been kild, or taken by the Spaniard. No (ſaith he) that is not the matter, but a thing which grieves me more than any ſuch matter can do. Now God for his mercy (quoth ſhe) I pray you husband let me know what it is. Marry wife (ſaith he) a friend of mine told me that you kept company with R.R. the veriеſt Ruffian in all the Town,

and

and a many other matters he told me of you. Hereat she crossing her self in token of admiration (though smiling inwardly) replies thus: Dear Husband, if this be all, then I pray you give over your pensiveness: I would to God I were as free from all other sins, as I am from that, then laying one hand on her head: she thus proceeds: I will not swear any thing touching him, but I would the Devill had all this under my hand, if I ever touched any mans mouth saving yours or some of our friends and kinsmen, or such at least as you have commanded me. Ha, ha, is this the matter? In troth I am glad that you have told me: I had verily thought it had been some greater matter, but I know well enough whereupon these speeches grew, and I would that you did likewise know, what moved him to speak them, I know you would not a little marvel, because he hath always professed such friendship towards you. In good faith I am nothing sorry that he hath awaked the sleeping dog. What mean you by that word (qd he?) Nay (quoth she) be not desirous to know it, you shall know it soon enough some other time. Birlady (saith he) I'le know it now. By my troth husband (saith she) I was oft wonderfully angry when you brought him in hither, yet I forbare to speak of it, because I saw you loved him so well. But speak now (saith he) and tell me what the matter is. Nay, nay (qd she) it skils not greatly. Go to wife (saith the good man) tell me, for I will know it. Then takes she him about the neck, and sweetly kissing him, saith thus: Ah my dear Husband, what villains are these that would seem to abuse you, whom I honour and love above all men in the world. Well Wife (saith he) I pray thee tell me the man that so misuseth us. In troth (quoth she) that vile dissembling Traitor, that flattering tell tale, that puts that bad report in your ears, whom you esteem so much: reposing such great confidence in him, he is the only man and none but he, that hath earnestly urged me any time this two years to commit folly with him. But God (I praise him) hath given me grace both to refuse him and his offers, although I were continually troubled and importuned by him: I wis, when you thought he came hither so often for your sake, it was for this cause for never a time that he came, but he was in hand with me to obtain his filthy desire, till in the end I threatned to tell you of it, but I was loth to do it, fearing to breed a quarell between you, so long as I was sure to keep him from doing you herein any injury: Beside,

Oh brave dissembler.

Almost as bad as *Judas* kisses.

The devill take the lyar.

Thus is he bor'd thorow the nose with a cushen.

I

I had still a good hope, that he would at length give over: I wis it was no fault of his that he sped not. Gods for my life (saith the good man) being in a great rage, what a treacherous villain is this? I would never have suspected any such matter in him, for I durst have put my life in his hands. By this light Husband (saith she) if ever he come more within the doors, or if ever I may know that you have any talk with him, Ile keep house no longer with you. Ah dear Husband, and with that she clips and culs him again about the neck, should I be so disloyal as to abuse you in this sort? so sweet, so amiable, & so kind a man, who lets me have my will in all things? God forbid I should live so long to become a strumpet now. But for Gods sake Husband, forbid him your house with whom this knave hath slandered me withal, yet I would the Devil had me if ever he made such motion to me: nevertheless, by Gods grace he shall not come henceforth in any place where I am and with that she begins to weep, and he (kind fool) doth appease and comfort her, promising and swearing that he will do as she will have him, save only that he will not forbid him his house, with whose company the other had charged her, and withall he vows, never to believe any more of these reports, nor so much as to harken to any such tales again, notwithstanding he still feels a scruple of suspition in his conscience: Within a while he begins to fall at defiance with his honest friend, who informed him of his Wives wantonnesse, and he seems to be so deeply besotted with her love, that you would say he were transformed without inchantment, into Acteons shape: His charge of House should still increaseth, he hath many Children, and is perplexed on every side; but his Wife follows her pleasure far more than before, for though it be never so openly known, yet will no man tell him thereof, because they know that he will not believe them, and (which is more ridiculous) he that abuseth him most, shall be most welcome unto him of any. To be short, age will overtake him, and perhaps poverty, from the which he will never be able to raise himself. Lo here the great good and pleasure that he hath gotten by entring into Lobs pound, every man mocks him; some say it is pitty because he is an honest man: others say, it is not a matter to be sorrowed for, sith it is the common rule of such. They of the better sort will scorn his company. Thus lives he in pain, grief, and disgrace. which he takes for great pleasure, and therein will continue till death cut him off.

As kind as a Sea-crab, seizing on a dead carrion.

CHAP, VIII. The humour of a woman that still desires to be gadding abroad.

THe next humour of a woman is, when the husband hath bæn in Lobs pound some five or six years, part whereof he hath spent in such pleasure as wedlock doth at the first afford, but now the date of these delights is out, he hath perhaps some three or four children: but his wife is now big again, and a great deal worse of this child than she was of any other: whereat the poor man grieves not a little, who takes great pains to get her that which she longs for: Well, the time of her lying down draws near, and she is wonderfully out of temper: so that it is greatly feared that she will hardly escape. Then falls he on his knees, and prays devoutly for his Wife, who soon after is brought to bed, wherefore he is not a little jocond, making sure account that God hath heard his prayers. She gossips, kinswomen and neighbours, come in troops to visit and rejoyce for her safe delivery. She for her part wants no good cherishing, whereby she recovers her strength, and is as fresh and lusty as ever she was.

After her Churching, she is invited by some of her neighbours. who also invites five or six others of her neighbours and friends, who is received and feasted with all kindness; which Banquet doth perhaps cost her Husband more than would have kept the house a whole fortnight: Amongst other she propounds a question, & makes a match to go all together to a certain Fair, which will be within ten days at such a place, to the which place they shall have a most brave and pleasant journey, by reason of the fair weather, for they will always conclude such an agreement in some of the best seasons of the year, and she takes upon her to make this motion chiefly in regard of her Gossip, which was lately brought a bed, that she may after her long pain and travel somewhat recreate and refresh herself. But she answered her with thanks for her good will, saying, she knows not how to get leave of her Husband. What (saith the other) that is the least matter of a thousand. Tush Gossip (saith another) stand not upon that, we will all go and be merry, and we will have with us my Gossip G. T. my Cousin H. S. though perhaps he be nothing kind to her: But this is their ordinary phrase, and they undertake this journey, because they cannot so well obtain their purposes

at

at home, being too near their Husbands noses. After this agreement, home she comes with a heavy countenance: The good man asketh what she aileth. Marry (quoth she) the Child is very ill at ease, (though he were never in better health since he was born) his flesh burns as though it were fire, and as the Nurse tells me, he hath refused the dug these two days, although she durst not say so much till now. He hearing this and thinking it true, is not a little sorry, goes presently to see his Child, and weeps for pity.

Well, night comes, to bed they go, and then she fetching a sigh, begins thus: Husband, I see you have forgotten me. How mean you that, saith he? Marry (quoth she) do you not remember that when I was in child-bed you said, that if it pleased God that I escaped, I should go to such a Fair with my Gossips and neighbours to make merry, and cheer up my self, but now I hear you not talk of it. In troth wife (saith he) my head is troubled with so many matters, and such a deal of business, that I have no leisure to think on any thing else: but there is no time past yet, the Fair will not be this fortnight. By my troth (quoth she) I shall not be well unless I go. Well wife (saith he) content your self: for if I can by any means get so much money ye shall go. You know it is not little that we shall spend there: yea more I wis then will be my ease to lay out. Good Christ (quoth she) is it now come to that? you promised me absolutely, without either ifs or auns: before God I will go, whether you will or no: for there goes my Mother, my Gossip T. my Cousin B and my Cousin R. and his wife. If you will not let me go with them, I know not with whom you will let me go. He hearing her thus wilful, thinks it best for his own quietnesse, to let her go, though he strain his purse somewhat the more. The time comes, he hires horses, buyes her a new riding gown, and doth furnish her according to her mind: peradventure there goes in their company a lusty Gallant, that will frollick it by the way on her Husbands cost, for his purse must pay for all. It may be he will go himself, because he hath never a man, or else cannot spare him from his work. But then is the poor man notably perplexed, for she will on purpose trouble him for every trifle more than she would do to another: because it doth her good to make a drudge of him; and so much the rather, that he may not afterwards have any desire to go abroad with her again.

Sometime her stirrop is too long, sometimes too short: and he

muſt ſtill alight to make it fit: ſometimes ſhe will wear her cloak, ſometimes not, and then he muſt carry it. Then finds ſhe fault with her horſes trotting, which makes her ſick, and then ſhe will alight and walk on foot, leaving him to lead the horſes. Within a while after they come to a water, then muſt he be troubled to help her up again. Sometimes ſhe can eat nothing that is in the Inne, then muſt he (being weary all day with riding) trudge up and down all the Town, to find ſomething that will fit her ſtomach: All which notwithſtanding, ſhe will not be quiet: and not ſhe onely, but her Goſſips alſo will be bobbing and quipping him, ſaying that he is not worthy to be a womans man. But he is ſo inured to theſe janglings that he cares not for all their frivolous words.

Well at length to the Fair they come, and then muſt he play the Squire in going before her, making ſo much room for them as he can, when there is any throng or preſſe of people, being very chary of his wife, leſt ſhe ſhould be hurt or annoyed by thruſting. There moyles he like a Horſe, and ſweats like a Bull, yet cannot all this pleaſe her. Some Dames of the company, which are more flush in crowns than her good man, beſtows money on Gold Rings, Hats, ſilk Girdles, Jewels, or ſome ſuch toyes; yea, coſtly toyes, which ſhe no ſooner ſees, but preſently ſhe is on fire, untill ſhe have the like. Then muſt he herein content her, (if he love his own eaſe) and have he money or not, ſome ſhift muſt be made to ſatiſfie her humor. Well now imagine them going homewards, and think his pain and trouble no leſſe, than it was coming forth: her Horſe perhaps doth flounder much, or trots too hard, which is peradventure by reaſon of a nail in his foot or ſome other miſchance. Then muſt he perforce buy, or hire another Horſe; and if he have not money enough to do ſo, then muſt he let her ride on his, and he trot by her ſide like a Lackey. By the way ſhe will ask for twenty things, for milk becauſe ſhe cannot away with their drink; for pears, plumbs, and cherries: When they come near a Town he muſt run before to chooſe out the beſt Inne: ever and anon as ſhe rides, ſhe will of purpoſe let fall her wand, her mask and gloves, or ſomething elſe, for him to take up, becauſe ſhe will not have him idle: When they are come home, ſhe will for a fortnight together, doe nothing elſe but gad up and down amongſt her Goſſips, to tell them how many gay and ſtrange things ſhe hath ſeen: all that hath paſſed by the way, in going and coming,

but

but especially of her good man, whom she will be sure to blame, saying, that he did her no pleasure in the world. and that she poor soul, being sick and weary, could not get him to help her, or to provide any thing for her that she liked: And finally, that he hath had no more care of her, than if she had been a meer stranger.

But he (poor sot) finding at his return all things out of order, is not a little troubled to set them in due frame again, and toyls exceedingly at his labour, that he may recover his charges which he hath been at in his journey. But she, what for gossiping, for pride, and idleness, will not set her hand to any thing: And yet if ought go well: she will say that it was through her heedfulnes and good huswifery. If otherwise, then will she scold & lay the fault thereof on him, although it be her own doings. To be short, having thus gotten a vein of gadding, she will never leave it, and hereby the poor man will be utterly spoiled, for both his substance shall be wasted, his limbs through labour fill'd with aches, his feet with the gout, & age comes on him before his time: yet as though this were not evil enough, she will be continually brawling, scolding, & complaining, how she is broken through child-bearing. Thus is the silly man up to the ears in Lobs pound, being on each side beset with care and trouble which he takes for pleasure, and therein languisheth whiles he lives.

CHAP. IX. The humour of a curst Quean, married to a froward Husband.

The next humour that is incident to a woman, is when the husband having entred very young into Lobs pound, and there fettered himself by his too much folly, for a vain hope of ticklish delights, which lasted but for a year or two, hath matched himself with a very froward and perverse woman (of which sort there are too many) whose whole desire is to be Mistress, and to wear the breeches or at least to bear as great a sway as himself. But he being crafty, and withall crabbed, will in no wise suffer this usurped soveraignty but with sundry matters withstands it. And there hath bin great stir and arguing about this matter between themselves, and now and then some battles: but do she what she can, either with her tongue or hands, notwithstanding their long controversie, which hath perhaps lasted at the least these twenty years: he is still victorious and holds his right: but you must think that his striving for it all this

while

while, hath bæn no small trouble and vexation unto him, beside all other aforesaid evils. All which, or part thereof, he hath likewise endured. Well, to be short, he hath perchance three or four children all married, and by reason of the great pains and travel that he hath taken in bringing them up, providing them portions, maintaining his wife, increasing his stock, or at least kæping it from being diminished, and living with credit amongst his neighbours: At last it may be he hath gotten the gout, or some other dangerous disease, and withall is grown old, and thereby fæble: so that being set, he can hardly rise, through an ach that he hath got in his armes or legs: Then is their long war come to an end, and the case (as Ployden saith) clean altered: For his wife being younger than he, and as frolick as ever she was, will now besure to have her own will in despight of his heart: Whereby the poor man which hath maintained the combate so long, is now utterly put down: his own children which before he kept in awe well enough, will now take heart to themselves, and if he reprove them for their lewdnesse and disobedience, she will maintain them against him to his fæce, which must næds be a great grief unto him.

But besides all this, he is in doubt of his servants; for they likewise neglect their former duty and lean all together to their Mistress: so that he poor man, which now by reason of his sickneſſe, and fæbleneſſe of body, hath more næd of attendance than ever he had, shall have but very little or none at all: For though he be as wise and as carefull as ever he was, yet sith he cannot bestir himself to follow them as he was wont, they contemn and make no more reckoning of him, than if he were a mær fool.

Then peradventure his eldest son, thinking that his father lives too long, will take upon him to guide the house, and dispose all things at his pleasure, as if his father were become an innocent, and could no longer look to things as he was wont: Judge you whether the good man seeing himself thus abused by his wife, children and servants, be grieved or not. If he purpose to make his Will, they will sæk all means to kæp him from doing it, because they hear an inkling, that he will bestow somewhat on the Parish, or will not bequeath his wife so much as she would have.

To be short, that they may make an end of him the sooner, they will many times leave him in his Chamber half a day and more with-

without meat, fire, or ought else, not one of them coming to see what he wants, or to do him any service: his wife is weary of him by reason of his spitting, coughing, and groaning.

All the love and kindnesse which he had in former times shewed unto her, is quite forgotten; but this strife for superiority, and his crabbednesse towards her (when she had justly moved him) this she can still as well remember, as when it was first done: Neither will she spare to prate thereof to her neighbours: telling them that he hath been a bad man. and that she hath led such a life with him, that if she had not been a woman of great patience, she should never have endured to keep house with so crabbed a churl.

She will likewise boldly reproach, and twit him in the teeth with those former matters, for it doth yet shrewdly stick in her stomach, that she could not till now be Mistress. But he that was wont to charm her tongue, and keep her under, who seeing him now in his distresse and weaknesse, takes advantage, and continues his bad usage: Seeing all his Children, which should fear and reverence him, take part with their Mother, being taught and set on by her: seeing this (I say) and being no lesse angry then grieved, he calls some of them in a rage, and when they are come before him, thus begins he to his wife.

Wife, you are she, whom by the laws of God and man, I should love and esteem more than any thing else in the world and you on the other side should bear the like affection to me: but whether you do so or not, I refer it to your own conscience: I tell you I am not well pleased with your using me thus: I think you take me still for the Master of the house as before you have done, but whether you think so or not, be sure I will be Master while I live, yet you I thank you, do use me and account of me in very slight manner: I have alway loved you well, never suffered you to lack that which was meet: I have in like sort loved, and also maintained your Children and mine, according to my degree, and now both you and they do very unkindly requite me.

Why (saith she) What would you have us to do? We do the best we can, but you cannot tell your self what you would have. The better we use you, and the more we tend you, the worse you are, but you were never other, always brawling, and never quiet, never pleased full nor fasting: I think never woman was so long troubled with a croaked Pestle as I have been.

Ay,

Ah Dame (saith he) leave these words I pray you: then turning him to his eldest son, he said: Son, I have marvelled at your behaviour of late towards me, and tell you I am not well pleased therewith: You are my eldest, and shall be mine heir, if you behave your self as a Child ought to do: But you begin already to take state upon you, and to dispose of my goods at your pleasure: I would not wish you to be so forward, but rather while I live, to serve and obey me as it becomes you to do: I have been no bad father unto you, I have nothing impaired or diminished, but increast that which was left me by my Father, which if you do your duty to me (as I did mine to him) I will leave to you after my decease as he left to me: but if you continue in your stubbornness and disobedience, before God (I swear) I will not bestow one penny or crosse upon thee.

Here his wife begins again to thwart him: Why, what would you have him do? it is impossible for any one to please you; he shall have enough to do that shall always tend you: I wis it is high time that you and I were both in Heaven, you know not your self what you would have, I marvel what you ail. Well, well (saith he) I pray you be quiet, do not maintain him thus against me, but it is always your order.

After this, the Mother and Son departing, consult together, and conclude, that he is become a child again, and because he hath threatned to disinherit them, they resolve that no man shall be suffered to come and speak with him: His son takes upon him more than before, being born out by his Mother; who together with him, makes every one believe that the poor man is become childish, and that he hath lost both his sence and memory.

If any of his honest friends and former acquaintance, which were wont to resort unto him, come now to ask for him, his Wife will thus answer them: Alas he is not to be spoken with, and when he demands the cause thereof, doubting he is dangerously sick: Ah good neighbour (saith she) he is become an Innocent, even a Child again, so that I poor soul must guide all the house, and take the whole charge of all things upon me, having none to help me: but God be praised for all.

In faith (saith the other) I am very sorry to hear this, and do much marvel at it, for it is not long since I saw him, & spoke with him, and

then

then he was in as good memory, and spake with as good sense & reason as ever he did before. In truth (saith she) he is now as I tell ye.

Thus doth she wrong and slander the poor man, which hath always lived in good credit, and kept his houshold in very good order: but you may be well assured, that he seeing himself in his age thus despised and injured, and being not able to remedy himself, nor stir without help from the place where he is, thereby to acquaint his friends therewith, which might in his behalf redresse it, is not a little grieved, vexed, and tormented in his mind, with sorrow and anger: So that it is a great marvel he falls not into despair: For it is enough to make a Saint become impatient to be used thus by those which should obey serve and honour him. And in my opinion this is one of the greatest corrosives that any man can feel: such is the issue of this great haste and extreme desire to be in Lobs pound, where he must now remain perforce, till death do end (at once) both his life and languishing.

CHAP. X. The humour of a Woman given to all kind of pleasures.

Another humour incident to a woman by nature, is, when the husband (thinking that wedlock was of all estates the happiest, and altogether replenished with delight and pleasure) because he saw some of his friends, who for a while after they were married, were very chearful & jocund, never ceaseth toyling and turmoyling himself till he hath gotten into Lobs pound, wherein he is presently caught fast like a bird in a net: for this comparison, if we do examine the particulars thereof, doth very fitly resemble his estate. The silly birds which flie from tree to tree and from field to field to seek meat, when they see a great deal of Corn spilt on the ground, think themselves well apaid, and without any fear come hither to feed thereon, picking up the grains of corn, but alas they are deceived, for on a sudden the net is drawn and they are all fast tied by the legs, and thence carried in a sack or panier one upon another to the fowlers house, then cooped up in a cage. Oh how happy would they think themselves, if they were again at their former liberty to fly whither they list, but they wish too late: yet were this all the evil that they should indure, it were well, but (which is worse) they shall soon after have their necks wrung off, & their little bodies spitted to be made meat for men to eat.

But they are therein far more simple than the Birds, for they being fast in Lobs pound, and so besotted with their own sorrows, that they have no power to free themselves: So likewise they have no will to do it. But to proceed; the wife not loving her husband, for some defect which is in him, that she may have some colour for that she doth, makes her mother and other friends which blame her for it, believe, that her husband is bewitcht; and by reason of some Sorcery, made for the most part impotent; hereupon she complains of her ill fortune, resembling it to those, which having the Cup at their noses cannot drink: mean while she hath a sweet heart in a corner, who is not bewitched, who useth her company so long, and with so little heed, that in the end her husband perceives it, and falling into the vain of jealousie, beats her well favouredly, and keeps a foul stir both with blows and words, so that she not liking his usage, gives him the slip, but then is he clean out of patience, and so husbands in this taking are so mad, that they never lin seeking them, and would give half they are worth to find her again: who having thus plaid the pageant, and seeing her husbands humour, compacts with her mother, whose good will she will be sure to get by one means or other (whereas at the first she will perhaps think hardly of her departure from her husband) she doth I say, so handle the matter with her that she will make the good man believe her daughter hath been all this while at home with her, and that she came to shun his bad usage, who (had she tarried with him till then) had been lamed for ever.

Before God (quoth she) I had rather you should restore her again to me, than beat her thus without cause, for I know that you suspect her wrongfully, and that she hath never offended you: I wis I have straitly examined her about it, but if she would have been naught, you did enough to provoke her: By Gods passion, I think few women could have born it. Well (it may be) that upon these or the like tearms he takes her again: it may be also that they are both desirous to be divorced, each accusing other, and seeking to winde themselves again out of Lobs pound, but in vain. For either the causes that they alledge are not thought sufficient by the Judge, how hard soever they plead, but must of force continue still together, are laughed to scorn of all that hear the cause: for if they be separated, yet will not all this set them free, but rather plunge them in deeper

than

than before, but neither of them can marry whiles the other lives, and their chastity so brittle (especially hers) that hold it cannot, nor long endure.

She who was wont to be so frolick, must needs continue so still. May peradventure, being now without controlment, follows her evil and lewd life more freely than before: and whereas she was but earst a private Queane, she is now common in the way of Goodfellowship, or else some lusty Gallant takes her into his house and shelters her by his nose, which must needs be unto him an exceeding inward grief, and an open disgrace and shame in the eyes of the world; and which is worse, he knows not how in the world to remedy it, but must perforce indure both, while this miserable life doth last.

CHAP. XI. The humour of a woman to get her Daughter a Husband, having made a little wanton escape.

THe next humour that a woman is addicted unto, is, when a lusty young Gallant riding at pleasure up and down the Countrey, but especially to those places of sports and pleasure where the finest Dames and dainty Girles meet, who can finely mince their Measures, having their tongues trained up to all kind of amorous chat; in which delightfull exercises, this Youngster both by reason of his youth, his loose bringing up, and natural inclination, takes a great felicity in such vain company: and so much the rather, because he findes himself always welcomed, and kindly entertained to such places, and the reason is the comelinesse of his person, his amiable countenance, and queint behaviour: for whosoever hath these good helps, shall want no favour at Womens hands. It may be also, that his parents are still living: and he their onely joy, they having perhaps no Child but him, so that all their most delight is in maintaining him bravely. It may be also, that he is newly come to his Lands, and loves to see fashions, though it cost his purse never so largely. If any Gentlewoman offer any kindnesse, he is ready to requite it: and at length through long passing to many places, he lights on one that doth exceedingly please his eye, and inflame his heart: she is perhaps Daughter to some Gentleman, some Citizen, or some worthy Farmer. She hath a clear com-

plexion, a fine proportion, a wanton eye, a dainty tongue, and a sharp wit; by reason of all which good gifts, she is grown very famous. She hath been wooed, sued, and courted by the bravest Gallants in the Countrey; of whom perhaps some one being more forward and couragious than the rest, hath offered her such kindnesse as sticks by the ribs a good while after, and would needs inforce this courtesie with such importunity, that she had not the power to resist it: for a woman that hath her fine wits, if she be withall of a chearfull sanguine complexion, cannot be so unkind, or so hard-hearted as to deny, or repulse the petition of an amorous Friend, if he do any thing earnestly prosecute the same. And (to be plain) be she of what complexion soever, she will be nothing slack to grant such a suit.

But to return to our purpose, by reason of her tender compassion, and kinde acceptance of his proffered service, it so falls out she hath plaid false, then is there no other shift but to keep it both secret and close, and to take such order as they best can, for smoothing up of the matter; he that hath done the deed, being a poor young man, though proper of body, and perhaps can dance very well, by which good quality he won her favour, and within a while after cropt the flower of her maidenhead: he (I say) after a week or two, and no further matter (lest this privy scape should be openly known) is warned from coming any more to the house, or frequenting her company whatsoever.

But now you must note, that she being but a simple girle, between fourteen and fifteen years of age, nothing expert, but rather a novice in such matters, and having been but lately deceived, knows not her self how it is with her: But her Mother which by long experience hath gotten great judgement, doth by her colour, her complaining of pain at her heart and stomach: with other like tokens, perceive it well enough, and having (as before I said) cashiered the Author of the action: then takes she her daughter aside, and schools her so that in the end she confesseth that he hath been dallying with her, but she knows not whether to any purpose or not. Yes (saith her Mother) it is to such purpose, as by these signes I know very well, that you have thereby both shamed your self, and all our friends, and spoiled your marriage quite and clean.

To be short, having somewhat chid her after the common order, for having no more respect nor care of her honesty, (yet not chiding very

very extreamly, because she knows the frailty of youth by her own former experience) she concludes thus comfortably: Sith it is done, and cannot be altogether remedied, she will seek both to hide and salve the matter as well as she can, charging her Daughter to set a good countenance on it, lest it should bee suspected, and to follow her counsell and commandement in all things: Whereupon the poor Wench willingly consenteth, then the Mother proceeds thus:

You know Master T. A. that cometh hither so often, he is you see a proper Gentleman, and a rich Heir, to morrow he hath appointed to be here again: Look that you give him good entertainment, and shew him good countenance. When you see me and the rest of our Guests talking and discoursing together, ever and anon cast your eyes on him, in the kindest and lovingest manner that you can, If he seem desirous to speak with you, be not coy, but hear him willingly, answer him courteously. If he intreat love of you, tell him that you know not what it means, and that you have no desire at all to know it; yet thank him for his good will; for that Woman is too uncourteous and uncivill, which will not vouchsafe the hearing or gently answering to those that love her and wish her well.

If he offer you money take none in any case; if a ring, or a girdle, or any such thing, at the first refuse it, yet kindly and with great thanks: but if he urge it on you twice or thrice, take it, telling him sith that he will needs bestow it on you, you will wear it for his sake. Lastly, when he takes his leave, ask him when he will come again: These instruments being thus given, and the plot laid for the fetching in of this kind fool into Lobs pound:

The next day he cometh, and is on all hands more kindly welcome and entertained: after dinner, having had great cheer, the Mother falls in talk with the other guests, and this frollick Novice gets him as neer to her Daughter as he can, and while the other are hard in chat he takes her by the hand, and thus begins to court her:

Gentlewoman, I would to God you knew my thoughts. Your thoughts Sir (saith she) how should I know them, except you tell them me? It may be you think something that you are loth to tell. Not so (saith he) yet I would you knew it without telling. But that (saith she smiling) is impossible. Then (quoth he) if I might doe it without offence, I would adventure to tell you them. Sir (saith she) you may freely speak your pleasure: for I do so much assure me of your

your honesty, that I know you will speak nothing that may procure offence.

Then thus (saith he) I acknowledge without feigning, that I am far unworthy of so great a favour, as to be accepted for your Servant, friend, and lover, which are so fair, so gentle, and every way so gracious, that I may truly say, you are repleni∫hed with all the good gifts that nature can plant in any mortal creature: But if you would vouch∫afe me this unde∫erved grace, my good will, diligence, and continual forwardne∫∫e to ∫erve and plea∫e you ∫hall never fail: but I would therein equal the mo∫t loyal lover that ever lived, I would e∫teem you more than any thing el∫e, and tender more your good name and credit than mine own.

Good Sir (quoth ∫he) I heartily thank you for your kind offer, but I pray you ∫peak no more of ∫uch matters, for I neither know what love is, nor yet care for knowing it: This is not the le∫∫on that my Mother teacheth me now adays. Why (∫aith he) if it plea∫e you, ∫he ∫hall know nothing of it; yet the other day I heard her talk of preferring you in marriage to one Ma∫ter G. R. How ∫ay you to that (quoth ∫he?) Marry thus (an∫wers the Gentleman) if you would vouch∫afe to entertain me for your Servant, I would never marry but onely rely upon your favour.

But that (∫aid ∫he) ∫hould be no profit to either of us both, a be∫ide it would be to my reproach, which I had not thought you would ∫eek. Nay (quoth he) I had rather dye then ∫eek your di∫credit. Well Sir (∫aith ∫he) ∫peak no more hereof, for if my Mother ∫hould perceive it, I were utterly undone. And it may be her Mother makes her a ∫ign to give over, fearing ∫he doth not play her part well.

At the breaking up of their amorous Parley, he conveys into her hand a gold ring, or ∫ome ∫uch toy, de∫iring her to take it and keep it for his ∫ake: which at the firſt (according to her Mothers precepts) ∫he doth refu∫e: but upon his more earne∫t urging of it, ∫he is content to take it in the way of honesty, and not on any promi∫e or condition of any farther matter: when it was brought to this pa∫∫e, the mother makes motion of a journey to be made the next morning, ∫ome ten or twelve miles off, to vi∫it, or feast with ∫ome friend, or to ∫ome Fair, or whatsoever other occa∫ion pre∫ents it ∫elf. To this moti∫on they all agree, and afterwards ∫it down to ∫upper, where he is placed next the Daughter, who carries her ∫elf ſo toward him with

her

her piercing glances, that the young Heir is set on fire therewith: Well, morning comes: they mount on Horseback, and by the opinion of them all: there is never a Horse in the company that can carry double but his: So the gull is appointed to have the Maiden ride behinde him, wherefore he is not a little proud: and when he feels her hold fast by the middle (which she doth to stay her self the better) he is even ravished with joy.

After their returning home, which perhaps will be the same night the Mother taking the Daughter aside, questions with her, touching all that had passed between the amorous Gallant, and her: which when her daughter had rehearsed, then proceeds the wily Grandame thus: If he court thee any more (as I know he will) then make him answer that thou hast heard thy father and me talk of matching thee with Master G. R. but that thou hast no desire as yet to be married: if he then offers to make thee his Wife, and use any comparisons of his worth and wealth as though he were every way as good as he, thank him for his good will and kindnesse, and tell him that you will speak with me about it, and that for thy own part thou couldst find in thy heart to have him to thy Husband rather than any one else: upon this lesson the daughter sleeps, revolving it all night in her mind.

The next morning she walkes into the Garden and this lusty yonker follows; when having given her time of the day, he falls to his former suit. She wills him to give over such talk, or she will leave his company: Is this the love you bear me, (quoth she) to seek my dishonesty? you know well enough that my Father and Mother are minded to bestow me otherwise.

Ah my sweet Mistress (saith he) I would they did so far favour me herein, as they do him: I dare boldly say and swear it, and without vain-glory utter it, that I am every way his equall. Oh Sir, (answers she) I would he were like you. Ah sweet Mistress (saith he) you dain to think better of me than I deserve, but if you would further vouchsafe me that other favour, I should esteem my self most happy. In troth Sir (saith she) it is a thing that I may not do of my self, without the counsel and consent of my Parents, to whom I would gladly move it, if I thought they would not be offended: But it would be so much the better, if you brake the matter unto them; and be sure, if they refer the matter to me,

you

you shall speed as soon as any. Ye being ravished with these words, and yielding her infinite thanks, trots presently to the Mother, to get her good will.

To be short (with some little adoe) the matter is brought about, even in such sort as he would desire: they are straight way contracted, and immediately wedded, both because that her friends fear that the least delay will prevent all, and because he is so hot on the spur, that he thinks every hour a year till it be done. Well, the wedding night comes, wherein she behaves her self so (by her Mothers counsell) that he dares swear on the Bible that he had her Maidenhead.

Within a while after, it comes to his Friends ears, without whose knowledge he hath married himself, who are exceeding sorry, knowing she was no meet match for him, and it may be they have heard withall of his Wives humour: but now there is no remedy that knot is knit, and cannot be undone, they must therefore have patience perforce.

Well he brings his fair Bride home to his own house, where (God wot) he hath but a small time of pleasure, for within three or four moneths after their marriage, she is brought to bed: Judge then in what taking the poor man is. If he put her away, his shame will be publick, she grows common, and he not permitted to marry again while he lives, and if he keep her still, love her he cannot, suspect her he will, and she both hate him, & perhaps seek his end: Finally, all the joys, pleasures, and delights which before time they had, are all turned to brawls, banning, curling and fighting. Thus is he hampered in Lobs pound, where he must of force remain, till death ends his lives miseries.

CHAP. XII. The humour of a woman being matched with an over-kind Husband.

THere is another humour incident to a Woman, which is when a Young man hath turmoyled and tossed himself so long, that with much adoe, he hath gotten into Lobs pound, and hath perhaps met with a Wife according to his own desire, and perchance such a one, that it had been better for him to have lighted

lighted on another: Yet he likes her ſo well, that he would not have miſt her for any Gold, for in his opinion there is no Woman alive like unto her, he hath a great delight to hear her ſpeak, is proud of his match, and peradventure is withall of ſo ſheepiſh a Nature, that he hath purpoſed wholly to govern himſelf by her counſel and direction: So that if any one ſpeak to him about a Bargain, or whatſoever other buſineſſe, he tells them that he will have his Wives opinion in it, and if ſhe be contented, he will go thorow with it; if not, then will he give it over: Thus is he as tame and pliable as a Jack-an-Apes to his Keeper. If the Prince ſet forth an Army, and ſhe be unwilling that he ſhould go, who (you may think) will ask her leave, then muſt he ſtay at home, fight who will for the Countrey: But if ſhe be at any time deſirous to have his room (which many times ſhe likes better than his company) ſhe wants no Journeys to imploy him in, and he is as ready as a Page to undertake them: If ſhe chide, he anſwers not a word; generally, whatſoever ſhe doth, or howſoever, he thinks it well done.

Judge now what a caſe this ſilly Calf is in: Is not he (think you) finely dreſt, that is in ſuch ſubjection? The honeſteſt Woman, and moſt modeſt of that Sex, if ſhe wear the Breeches, ſhe is ſo out of reaſon in taunting and controlling her Huſband: For this is their common fault, and be ſhe never ſo wiſe, yet becauſe a Woman, ſcarce able to govern her ſelf, much leſs her Husband, and all his affairs: For were it not ſo, doubtleſs God would have made her the head: which ſith it is otherwiſe, what can be more prepoſterous, than that the Head ſhould be governed by the Foot? If then a wiſe and honeſt Womans ſuperiority be unſeemly, and breed great inconveniences, &c. How is he dreſt (think you) if he light on a fond, wanton, and malicious Dame? Then (doubtleſſe) he is ſoundly ſped: ſhe will not ſtick to keep a ſweet-heart under his noſe; yet is he ſo blind, that he can perceive nothing, but for more ſecurity ſhe will many times ſend him packing beyond Sea about ſome odde errand, which ſhe will buzze in his eares, and he will perform it at her pleaſure, albeit ſhe ſend him forth at midnight, in Rain, Hail, or Snow, for he muſt be a man fit for all weathers: Their children (if they have any) muſt needs be

brought up, apparelled, fed, and taught, onely according to her pleasure: and one special point of their learning, is alwayes to make no account of their Father: If any of their children be daughters, she will marry them according to her mind, to whom she list, when she list, and give with them what Dowry she list, without acquainting him therewith, till she have concluded the match, and then she tells him not to have his consent, but as a Master may tell his servant, to give him direction how to behave himself to deal therein. Finally, she orders all things as she thinks best her self, making no more account of him (especially if he be in years) than men do of an old horse which is past labour.

Thus is he mewed up in Lobs pound, plunged in a sea of cares and corrosives, yet he (kind fool) deems himself most happy in his unhappiness, where he must now perforce remain while his life doth last, and great pitty it were he should want it, sith he likes it so well.

CHAP. XIII. The humour of a Woman whose Husband is gone beyond the Sea, upon some busines.

Another humour of a woman is, when the Husband hath been married some seven or eight years, more or lesse, and as he thinks, he hath met with a good Wife as any man can have, with whom he hath continued all the aforesaid time, with great delights and pleasures: But admit he be a Gentleman, and that he is desirous to purchase honour by following Arms and in this humour he is resolved to make a step abroad, and not to tarry alwaies like a cowardly Drone by the smoak of his own Chimney: But when he is ready to depart, she having her cheeks blubbered with tears, falls about his neck, culs, kisseth, and imbraceth him, then weeping, sighing, and sobbing, she thus begins to him:

Ah sweet Husband, will you now leave me? Will you thus depart from me, and from your loving Children, which know not when we shall see you again, or whether you shall ever come home

again,

again or no? Alas sweet Husband go not: Tarry with us still, if you leave us, we are utterly undone.

Ah sweet Wife (saith he) dissuade me not from this enterprise, which concerns my Credit and Allegeance: for it is our Princes commandment, and I must obey: but be you well assured, I will not be long from you (if it please God.)

Thus doth he comfort and quiet her in the best sort that he can, and be she never so importunate, be her teares never so many, her intreaty never so forcible, yet go he will, esteeming his Renown and Duty to his Prince and Countrey, more than Wife and Children, though next to it, he esteem and love them chiefest of all other. And at his departure, he recommends them to the care and courtesie of his chiefest friends: Yet some there be whose tender hearts melt so easily with kind compassion that one of their wives tears, and the least of their intreaties, will ty them so fast by the leg at home, that they will not stir one foot frome her sweet side, neither for King nor Keysar, Wealth nor Honour. These are Cravens, and unworthy to be called Gentlemen.

But to return to this valourous and brave minded Gentleman, of whom we spake before; It may be, that either by the long continuance of the Wars, or by his mis-fortunes, in being taken Prisoner, or some other lett, he comes not home in four or five years, and all that while there is no newes of him, you may be sure that his Wife is a sorrowful Woman, and wholly surcharged with grief, being thus deprived of her loving Mate, and hearing nothing of his estate. But all things have an end, and she seeing that in so long time, she can hear no tidings of him, doth peremptorily conclude that he is dead. Then considering to live comfortlesse in Widows estate, were an uncouth life, she determines to marry her self to some one, so soon as conveniently she may: which will be soon enough; for a fair Woman, if willing, can want no choice. Thus the former sorrow is somewhat alaid, and within a while after, clean extinguisht by the fresh delights, pleasures, contents and solace, which this new choice doth yeld. So that now her other Husband is wholly forgotten, her Children which she had by him little regarded and the Goods which belong to them, are spent on others, while the poor wretches want things needfull, but not blowes and hard usage.

To be short, the tears which she bestowed upon her other Husband at his departure, are dried up, her imbraces banished. And whosoever should see her with this second Husband, and what kindnesse she shews him, would verily think that she loves him far better than she did the first, who in the mean while is either taken Prisoner, or else fighting in extream hazard of his life.

But in the end it chanceth so, that by paying his Ransom (if he have been prisoner) home he comes, clean changed, through the many troubles he hath had: and being come somewhat neer, fails not to enquire of his wife and children, for he is in great fear, that they are either dead, or in some great distresse. And doubtlesse in the time of his Imprisonment, or other dangers, he hath oft thought, oft dreamed of them and oft sorrowed for them, oft besought God to preserve and bless them. And that perhaps sometimes, at the very instant when she was in the others arms, toying and dallying, and in the midst of her delights.

Well, enquiring (as aforesaid) he hears that she is married again, then judge you with what grief he hears it. But his grief is bootlesse, for now the matter is past remedy, if he have any care of his credit, any regard of his estimation he will never take her more though perhaps the other, having his pleasure of her, could be well contented either to restore her to him, or to leave her to any one else.

She on the other side is utterly ashamed, and her name stained with perpetual reproach: and neither he nor she can marry whiles they live. Their poor children are likewise grieved and shamed at their Mothers infamy. Sometimes likewise it happens that for the wives cause the Husband being couragious quarrels, and perhaps combates with him, who being better than himself, doth either wound or kill him, and the occasion hereof spring from their wives pride, because (for sooth) she will take the wall of the others Wife or sit above her: whom she will in no wise suffer, nor loose an inch of her estate, and hereupon the Husbands must go together by the ears.

Thus the supposed blessednesse which he expected by plunging himself in Lobs pound, is turned into sorrow, trouble, danger, and continuall discontent while life doth last.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV. The humour of a Woman that hath been twice married

THere is another humour belonging to a Woman, which is, when a Young man (having found the way into Lobs pound) meets with a Wife of like years, fresh, lusty, fair, kind, and gracious: with whom he hath lived two or three years in all delights, joys and pleasures, that any married couple could have. Never did the one displease the other; never foul word past betwixt them but they are almost still colling and billing each other like a couple of Doves: And nature hath framed such Sympathy between them, that if the one be ill at ease or discontented, the other is so likewise. But in the middest of this their mutual love and solace, it chanceth that the dyes, whereat he grieves so extreamly, that he is almost beside himself with sorrow: he mourns not onely in his Apparel, for an outward shew, but unfeignedly in his very heart, and that so much, that he shuns all places of pleasure and all company, lives solitarily, and spends the time in daily complaints and moans, and bitterly bewailing the losse of so good a Wife, wherein no man can justly blame him, for it is a loss worthy to be lamented, and a Jewel, which whosoever hath, is happy (but this happiness is very rare.)

To be short, his thoughts are all on her, and she is so firmly printed in his mind, that whether he sleep or wake, she seems alwayes to be in his sight: but as all things have an end, so here had sorrow. After a while, some of his friends having spied out a second match, which as they think is very fit for him, do prevail so much with him, through their perswasions, that he accepts it, and marries himself again, but not as before, with a Young Maid, but with a lusty Widdow, of a middle age, and much experience, who by the trial which she had of the first Husband, knows how to handle the second: But that she may do it the better, she doth not presently discover her humour, till she have thorowly markt how he is inclined, what his conditions are, and

what

what his nature is: which finding it mild, and kind, and very flexible (the fittest mould to cast a Fool in) having now the full length of his foot, she shewes she her self what she is, unmasking her dissembling malice; her first attempt is to usurp Superiority and to become his Head, and this she obtains without great difficulty, for there is nothing so lavish as a simple and well natured young man, being in subjection, that is married to a Widdow, especially if she be (as the most of them are) of a perverse and crabbed nature. I may very well compare him to an unfortunate Wretch, whose ill fortune is to be cast into some strong Prison, under the keeping of a most cruel and pittilesse Jayler, that is not moved to compassion, but rather to great rigour, in beholding the miseries of this poore Wretch, whose only refuge in this distresse, is to pray unto God, to give him patience to endure this crosse, for if he complain of his hard usage, it will afterwards prove worse.

But to proceed. This jolly Widdow will within a while grow jealous, fear and suspect that some other Dame hath part of that which she so earnestly desired, and wherewith she could never be satisfied, so that if he glut not her insatiate humour, straightway she conceiveth this opinion; If he do but onely talk, nay, (which is worse) look on any other Woman, for she by her good will would be alwayes in his arms, or at the least in his company: For as the Fish which having been in water, that through the heat of the summer is half dried up, begins to stick full of mud, seeks for fresh water, and having found it, doth willingly remain therein, and will in no wise returne to his former place: Even so an old Woman, having gotten a young Man, will cling to him like Ivy to an Elme.

But on the other side, a young man cannot love an old Woman, howsoever he doth dissemble, neither is there any that more endangers his death: for it is with him, as with one that drinketh musty wine, who if he be thirsty, feels nothing while he is drinking, but at the end of his draught, he feels such a displeasing tast, that it doth almost turn his stomach.

But if young men in no wise can fancy old Women, what love thinke you young Women can bear to old Men, when besides the sundry imperfections of their Age, which are so loathsome, that it

is

is impossible for a fresh, young, tender Damsell, (be she never so vertuous) to endure their company, much lesse the kisses and imbraces of the person which hath them: All the lusty Gallants thereabouts will not fail to use whatsoever devices and means possible for the horning of the old Dotard: hoping that she will be easily won to wantonesse: And surely they ground this hope on great likelihood; for sith it is no difficult exploit to graft the like kindness on a young mans forehead, who is able in far better measure to feed his Wives appetite, and she hath therefore more cause to be true to him, it may surely seem no great matter to perform the like piece of service with this other unfortunate Dame.

But now to return to our young man, yok'd (as before I said) to this old Widdow, I thus conclude, that his estate is most miserable: For besides the danger of his health, and besides the subjection, nay rather servitude which he lives in, this third evil, (I mean his Wives jealousie) is alone an untolerable torment unto him: So that be he never so quiet, never so desirous to content her, never so fearfull to displease her, yet cannot he avoid her brawls, objections, and false accusations of Lewdnesse and Disloyalty: For an Old Woman infected with Jealousie, is like a Hellish Fury.

If you go to any of her Friends about businesse, yea, to the Church to serve God, yet will she alwayes think the worst, and assure her self, that he playes false, though indeed he be never so continent: Who whatsoever he pleadeth in his own defence, yea, though he prove himself blamelesse, by such reasons as she can by no reason confute, yet will not all this satisfie her: Such is the perverseneſſe of her stubborn, crabbed, and malicious nature, made worse by Dotage and Raging Jealousie: For being pride to her owne defects, and knowing that he by reason of his youth and handsomeneſſe may perchance fall in favour with a young Dame, thinking withall that a young man, when he may have such a match, will be loth to leave it for a worse or preferre sowr verjuice before sweet wine, she concludes peremptorily in those suggestions as before. Loe here the issues of this Asses turning into Lobs pound, and intangling of himself again, when he had once gotten out to his former liberty, which if he once more looked for, he is mad; for he must now perforce continue

nue there while life doth last, which by this means, will be far shorter, and he look far older, having bæn but two yeares married with this old crib, than if he had lived ten years with a young wife.

CHAP. The humour of a young Woman given over to all kind of wantonnes.

THere is yet another humour that a Woman is subject to, which is, when an unfortunate young Man having long laboured to get into Lobs pound, and having in the end obtained his desires, doth match himself with a lusty wanton Young Wench, which without fear of him, or care of her own credit, takes her pleasure frælv, and withall so over-boldly, and unadvisedly, that within a while her Husband perceives it, who thereupon being not a little inraged, doth in the heat of his impatience, after much brawling on both sides, roughly and desperately threaten her, thinking thereby to terrifie her, and make her honest by compulsion: But that makes her worse, for where as before she did it for wantonnes, now will she do it for despite: and what with the one and the other, be so inflamed, that were she sure to be killed for it, yet would she not leave it: Which he perceiving watching her doings so narrowly, that in the end he sæs her sweetheart come closely to his house, then being on fire with fury, runs hastily to surprize him, and enters his Wives Chamber, with full purpose to kill him, though he had ten thousand lives: But judge you what a taking the poor young man is in, sæing himself thus surprized, and looking for nothing else but present death, because he hath nothing to defend himself. But she, for whose sake he hath incurred this danger, doth kindly fræ him by this stratagem: for as her Husband is ready to strike or stab him, she catcheth him hastily about the middle, crying out, Alas man what do you mean? While she thus stayes her Husband, the yonker betakes him to his heels, running down the stairs amain, and out of the doors, as if the Devil were at his tail, and after him the good man, as fast as he can drive. But when he sæs that he cannot overtake him, he turns back in a like rage,

to

to wreak his anger on his Wife. But she dreading as much gets her hastily (before his return) to her Mother, to whom she complains of his causeles suspition, and Devilish fury, justifying her self, as if she were not the Woman that would commit so lewd a part: But her Mother sifting the matter narrowly, her Daughter confesseth her fault, but to make it seem the les, she tells her a large tale of the Young Mans importunity, who for so long time together, did continually trouble her, and whither so ever she went he would be sure to follow her, begging pitifully her love, and favour, that she had often sharply answered him, and flatly denied his Suit, yet could she not for all that be rid of him: so that in the end she was inforced for her own quietnesse to grant his request: She repeats withall, how kindly and intirely he loves her, how much he hath bestowed on her, how many foul journeys he hath had for her sake, in Rain and Snow, as well by Night as Day, in danger of Thieves, in peril of his Life, and how narrowly he escaped her Husband the last time, so that for very pitty and compassion, she was moved to favour him: And no Woman could be so hard hearted, as to suffer so true and kind a Young Man to languish for her love, and dye unregarded: for on my life Mother (saith she) if I had not yielded, he would have died for thought.

The Mother hearing her Daughter to say thus, accepts her answer for current, and thinks that she hath sufficiently justified her self; but to prevent further scandall, and to appease her angry son in law, and reconciled her Daughter unto him by casting a mist before his eyes, she takes this course, she sends for her special Gossips and Companions, whose counsels in like cases she doth use: They comming at the first call, and being all assembled, either before a good fire (if it be Winter) or in a green Arbour (if it be Summer) one of them noting her daughters heavy countenance, demands the cause thereof: Marry (saith she) she hath had a mischance, about which I have made bold to trouble you, and crave your advice: With that she recounts all the whole matter unto them, but shewing the true cause of her Husbands anger: To her short, she hath ready two or three pottles of Wine, and a few junkets, which they presently fall aboard on, that they may the better give their several verdicts afterwards; mean while they com-

for the Young Womar, bidding her assure her self, that her Husband is more perplexed than she, and that I know by mine own experience, for my Husband and I were once at variance, but he could never be quiet till we were made friends. In good faith Gossip (saith another) and so served I mine. Another makes a motion to send for the Young Gallant that is so true a lover to her Gossips Daughter, that his presence may cheer her, and rid away her Melancholy.

This Motion doth her Mother faintly contradict, but in the end most voyces prevail, he is sent for and comes with a trice, then there is much good chat, many a reproach and kind scoff given the poor Husband: And to mend the matter, comes in the Chamber-maid, who was privy to all the former close packing between her Mistress and her Sweet-heart, and for her silence and imployment, in furthering both their contents, she hath gotten a good new gown and somewhat else.

It may be her Master hath sent her abroad about some business, or perhaps she coyns an excuse of her self, thereby onely to make a step abroad to see her Mistress, and to bring her some newes how all things go at home: She hath no sooner set her foot within the room where they are, then one of them ask how her Master doth? My Master (saith she) I never saw a man in that taking: I dare say, that since yesterday morning when this mis-fortune happened, he hath not eaten one crumme, drunk one drop, or slept one wink all yesternight. To day he sat down to dinner, and put one bit in his mouth, but could not swallow it, for he spit it out presently, & sate a good while after in a dump: In the end striking his knife on the table, he rose hastily, and went into the Garden, and immediately came in again: To be short, he is altogether out of temper, and can rest no where: He doth nothing but sigh and sob, and he looks like a dead man: hereat they laugh apace, and to be short, they determine that two of the chief of them, shall go and speak with him the next morning, and that when they are in the middest of their talk, the rest shall come in afterward. The Mother with her two Gossips, according to this plot, do proceed in the matter. And next morning finding him in his dumps, one of them gently asks him what he ailes: hereto he answers onely with a sigh: whereupon she takes occasion thus to speak: In good faith Gossip, I must chide you,

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my Gossip your wives mother told me I know not what of a disagreement between your wife and you, and a certain fond humour that you are fallen into: I wis I am sorry to hear it: And before God you are not so wise as I had thought you had been, to wrong your wife thus without a cause, for I durst lay my life there is no such matter. This good day (saith another) I have known her ever since she was a little one, both Maid and Wife, and I never saw but well by the woman: And in good sooth it grieves me to the very heart, that her name should now come in question without cause: Before God, you have done the poor woman that disgrace, and so stained her good name, that you will never be able to make her amends. Then steps in the Chamber-maid with her five eggs. In good faith (saith she) I know not what my Master hath seen, or whereon he doth ground his suspition, but I take God to my witness, that I never saw any such matter by my Mistress and yet I am sure that if there were any such thing, I should see it as soon as another. Gods body, Drab (saith he, all inraged) wilt thou face me down of that which my self saw? Oh Gossip, (quoth the one of the Dames) God forbid that every man and woman which are alone together, should do evil. I deny not (saith the Chambermaid) that the villanous knave hath long sued unto my Mistress for such a matter, but by my honesty Master, I know that there is never a man alive, whom she hates more: And rather than she would commit any such folly with him, she would see him hang'd and be burned her self: I marvel how the Devil he got into the house.

Here the other Gossips come in, one after another, and each gives her verdict: In good faith Gossip (saith one) I think that next your wife, there is never a woman in the world, that loves you better than I do: and if I knew or thought any such matter, I would not lett to tell you of it. Surely (saith another) this is but the Devils work to set them at variance, for he cannot abide that husband and wife should live well together. In good faith saith the third, the poor woman doth nothing but weep, By Christ (quoth the fourth) I fear it will cost her her life, she grieves and takes on in such sort. Then comes the Mother weeping and crying out making as though she would scratch out his eyes with her nails; exclaiming in this sort.

Ah cursed Caitiff, woe worth the time that ever my Daughter

matcht

matcht with thee, to be thus shamed and slandered, and have her name spotted without cause. But she is well enough served, that would take such a base churl, when she might have had sundry good Gentlemen. Ah good Gossip (saith another) be not out of patience.

Ah Gossip (saith she) if my Daughter were in fault, by our good Lord, I would kill her my self. But think ye I have no cause to be moved, when I see my child, being guiltlesse, thus used? With that she flings out of doors in a rage, and all the Gossips come upon him thick and threefold, who is so full of sundry thoughts, and so grieved and troubled, that he knows not whereon to resolve, nor what to say.

In the end they growing somewhat calmer, promise if he will, to undertake the reconciling of him and his wife, which he most earnestly desireth them to do.

They accordingly perform it, so that all controversies are ended, all strife ceased, the matter hushed up, and his wife taken home again; who taking greater courage by the success hereof, and being now clean past shame, will grow far bolder in her villany, than before. And he poor Peacock, on the other side, having his courage thus quailed, will never afterwards fall at odds with her, for fear of the like storm, but will suffer her to have her own will in all things, and be in a manner subject to her, spending the remnant of his life in care, fear, discontent and grief, his goods wasting he knows not how, and himself become a laughing stock to all that know him.

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FINIS.